Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Computers & Graphics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/cag



An integrative view of foveated rendering

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history: Received June 1, 2023

Keywords:

Foveated rendering, Gazecontingent rendering, Adaptive resolution, Geometric simplification, Shading simplification, Chromatic degradation, Spatiotemporal deterioration

ABSTRACT

Foveated rendering adapts the image synthesis process to the user's gaze. By exploiting the human visual system's limitations, in particular in terms of reduced acuity in peripheral vision, it strives to deliver high-quality visual experiences at very reduced computational, storage, and transmission costs. Despite the very substantial progress made in the past decades, the solution landscape is still fragmented, and several research problems remain open. In this work, we present an up-to-date integrative view of the domain from the point of view of the rendering methods employed, discussing general characteristics, commonalities, differences, advantages, and limitations. We cover, in particular, techniques based on adaptive resolution, geometric simplification, shading simplification, chromatic degradation, as well spatio-temporal deterioration. Next, we review the main areas where foveated rendering is already in use today. We finally point out relevant research issues and analyze research trends.

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, both the display resolution and pixel density have rapidly increased in response to the demands of a variety of application setups, including immersive virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR), and large high-resolution displays (LHRD). Despite the impressive improvements witnessed in the past, current displays are still far from matching human capabilities, and growth in pixel counts and density is still continuing. For instance, the densest commercial near-10 eye displays can offer an angular resolution on an aver-11 age of 10-15 cycles per degree, with exceptions such as 12 Varjo VR-3 achieving angular resolution of 35 cycles per 13 degree [213, 45], while humans can perceive over 60 cy-14 15 cles per degree in the fovea centralis [200, 169]. Moreover,

current displays are also viewing-angle restricted, e.g., on 16 average VR displays are limited to a field-of-view (FOV) 17 of $90^{\circ} - 110^{\circ}$ [45] whereas a human can perceive a much 18 wider range (see Sec. 3.2). Moreover, while some com-19 mercial displays have appeared that significantly increase 20 FOVs (e.g., StarVR reaches a 210° horizontal FOV), sup-21 porting wide FOVs together with high resolution is an open 22 research problem [251]. Specific setups, like stereoscopic or 23 light field displays, further increase the needed pixel count. 24

Interactive and immersive applications must also meet the important constraints on refresh rates imposed by the human perceptual system. Nowadays, 90 Hz has been established as a standard VR frame rate, while interactive gaming monitors maintain ≥ 120 Hz [88]. Nevertheless, according to Cuervo et al. [50], the refresh rate may need to be increased up to 1800 Hz for life-like VR immersion.

The need to generate a large number of pixels at very ³² high frequencies is only partially matched by the concurrent increase in the performance of graphics hardware. ³⁴ First of all, the hardware capabilities are typically ex-³⁵



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Fig. 1. The chart is depicting the outstanding foveated rendering research included in this survey report. The novel techniques described different peripheral degradation techniques. The latest papers are still unpublished in 2021 during writing this survey.

ploited to improve the visual realism of rendered images, by increasing scene complexity or rendering quality. Many 2 data sets, including large simulation data [104], CAD mod-3 els [257], or production-quality 3D scene descriptions [212] are often exceedingly large and costly to render in even 5 the simplest modality. Moreover, while global illumination algorithms, such as ray tracing and path tracing have been significantly accelerated in the recent years by the emergence of programmable GPUs with general-purpose 9 programming capabilities and dedicated raytracing cores, 10 real-time photorealistic image synthesis remains extremely 11 difficult on current graphics platforms because of the in-12 trinsic complexity of accurately computing light propaga-13 tion in complex and possibly dynamic environments. Scal-14 ing to remote rendering systems is only a very partial solu-15 tion since video transmission matching human visual field 16 and frequency constraints consumes over 100 Gbps [22], 17 which is infeasible over the current network standard. 18

As a result, generating high-quality interactive experi-19 ences remains an elusive target that we cannot expect to 20 solve in the foreseeable future by hardware performance 21 improvement alone. For this reason, the last decades have 22 seen a flourishing of methods that strive to improve ren-23 dering performance in time and resource-constrained set-24 tings [257, 6]. The underlying idea of all these techniques 25 is to exploit various characteristics of our visual system 26 to present approximate images that can be computed or 27 transmitted with the available resources and timing con-28 straints while being perceived identical, or marginally dif-29 ferent, to the high-quality target. 30

In particular, on displays that uniformly cover a reason-31 ably large FOV, much of the visual information is wasted 32 due to the space-variant nature of human vision, which 33 has high resolution only in a small central region. In 34 fact, due to the highest cone density, the color and visual 35 detail perception are higher in a smaller retinal region, 36 the fovea [106, 38, 80]. Aside from the fovea, vision in 37 the periphery quickly diminishes. As a result, in current 38 VR setups, only 4% of the pixels are visible at a fixa-39 tion [106, 173]. Likewise, Wei et al. [238] report foreated 40 region covers roughly 8% of the whole 60° of a desktop 41

monitor.

Developing specialized image synthesis methods that exploit the human visual system's limitations, in particular in terms of reduced acuity in peripheral vision, to deliver high-quality visual experiences at very reduced computational, storage, and transmission costs is thus a potentially very effective approach. Techniques to achieve this goal have been introduced in the past under the name of "foveated rendering" [80, 173], "gaze-contingent rendering" [61, 56, 34, 60, 163, 151, 218, 203, 204, 9, 26, 239, 114] or, in more general context, "perception driven rendering" [164, 27]. However, "foveated rendering" is more prevalent in the literature. Thereby, in this survey, we will stick to this terminology. Over the years, many foveated rendering techniques have been introduced to optimize rendering fidelity, frame rate, compression, transmission, and power consumption (Fig. 1). In this context, the fundamental tasks are the identification of the user's gaze and the exploitation of this knowledge to perform the optimization. Many variations have been proposed, with vertical solutions dependent on specific gaze tracking, displays, or rendering algorithms.

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In the recent past, several surveys have been presented 64 in foreated rendering research (Sec. 2). However, these 65 studies were mainly limited to particular display technolo-66 gies (mostly VR), applications, as well as on perceptual 67 issues. On the other hand, our survey provides an up-to-68 date integrative view of foreated rendering, investigating 69 the entire research spectrum from the point of view of the 70 rendering methods employed, showing their commonalities, 71 differences, and specialization to specific setups. Compres-72 sion and transmission are covered as they form an enabling 73 technology for distributed rendering. The target audience 74 of our survey includes computer graphics researchers and 75 practitioners in relevant application fields. Researchers 76 will find a structured overview of the field, which organizes 77 the various problems and existing solutions, classifies the 78 existing literature, and indicates challenging open prob-79 lems. Practitioners and domain experts will, in turn, find 80 a presentation of the areas where foveated rendering has 81 already been applied in practice, as well as an analysis of 82



Fig. 2. A visual index of this survey.

applications and settings that still pose major challenges. 1 After summarizing the related survey literature (Sec. 2), 2 we present an overview of relevant properties of the hu-3 man visual system (HVS) and explain the different terminologies required to comprehend the foveated rendering 5 (Sec. 3). Following that, we provide an abstract character-6 ization of the techniques that can be applied for foveated rendering, introducing our proposed classification (Sec. 4). The various solutions proposed in the literature, their fundamental elements, key problems, as well as promising po-10 tential research directions are then analyzed according to 11 our classification (Sec. 5 - 8). We then provide an overview 12 of the main applications in which foreated rendering has 13 been applied (Sec. 9). We finally discuss the identified 14 research issues and research trends (Sec. 10) and con-15 clude with a general summary of the findings of this study 16 (Sec. 11). A visual index of this survey is depicted in 17 Fig. 2. 18

¹⁹ 2. Related surveys

The study of foveation effects has a very long history. 20 Early applications were mostly in psychophysical research, 21 with experiments centered around studying the effects of 22 stimuli presented when the participant's gaze is fixated 23 upon a predefined location. Such a concept was first pro-24 posed by Aubert and Foerster in 1857 [15]. Later, in 25 1973, Stephen Reader [185] was among the first to de-26 velop computerized gaze-contingent imagery. Following, 27 the gathered knowledge was exploited in a variety of ap-28 plications, giving birth to the foreated rendering research 29 area. Extensive surveys on different facets of foveated 30 rendering have been conducted over time, such as eve-31 tracking [180, 190, 107, 191, 33, 119], latency require-32 ments [8, 218, 135, 221], foveated display classification 33 [102, 202, 61, 171], gaze-contingent rendering [229], pe-34 ripheral vision [206], peripheral limitations [83], periph-35

eral degradation effect [235], peripheral visual artifacts [97], graphics quality constraints [40], foveated path tracing [118], foveated VR and AR optics [45, 95]. However, an up-to-date overall characterization and study of the graphics techniques employed for optimization purposes are missing.

In an eye-tracking and interaction survey, Duchowski et 42 al. [215] propose a taxonomy for gaze-based interaction ap-43 plications in which foreated rendering has been described 44 as a *passive interaction* that manipulates the screen con-45 tent in response to eve movement. The taxonomy further 46 is classified into *model* and *image-based* rendering. The 47 model-based approaches pre-manipulate graphics geome-48 try before even the rendering process starts, e.g., number 10 of triangles reduction. In contrast, the image-based ap-50 proaches reduce spatiotemporal complexity of pixel data 51 just before rendering with convolution filter, e.g., Laplace 52 [34], Gaussian [223, 42, 140], and Kalman filter [96]. Note-53 worthy, the Gaussian filter is widely used as it is more com-54 patible with the human visual system [42]. This taxonomy 55 has been well adopted in several other studies [57, 58]. 56 Furthermore, Hunter et al. [163] combine both image 57 and model-based rendering as a hybrid approach which 58 is more appropriate for GPU implementation on modern 59 hardware. In another survey on gaze-contingent display, 60 Duchowski et al. [61] classify screen-based foveated ren-61 dering into focus plus context and screen-based displays. 62 Spjuit et al. [102, 202] provide a classification of displays 63 along two axes. The first one characterizes a display ac-64 cording to how angular resolution varies as a function of ec-65 centricity. The second axis, addresses how a system adapts 66 to changes in user gaze direction. As each of these axes is 67 divided in four categories (from none to full), a total of 16 68 display categories are identified. 69

Among the most relevant surveys, Swafford et al. [210] 70 investigate four foveated rendering methods: peripheral 71

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resolution, variable per-pixel depth buffer samples for 1 screen-space ambient occlusion (SSAO), GPU-level tessel-2 lation for the fovea, and variable-per-pixel ray casting mea-3 sures throughout the field of view. Weier et al. [244] con-4 cisely surveyed foreated rendering in the context of the 5 more general field of "perception-driven rendering". In 6 this survey, foveated rendering has been classified into two 7 classes: with and without an active gaze tracker, and fur-8 ther divided into scene simplification and adaptive sam-٥ pling. The work has been further extended in Martin 10 Weier's Ph.D. thesis [239], which extends the previous 11 state-of-the-art report [244] discussing pre-filtering, sam-12 pling adaptation, temporal coherence, and post-filtering 13 aspects of current perception-driven methods. Our work 14 focuses exclusively on foveated graphics and provides a 15 deeper coverage of this field. Most recently, Matthews et 16 al. [150] published a brief report on a few seminal foveated 17 rendering research, with existing research challenges and 18 future research directions. Noteworthy, most of these sur-19 veys are strictly limited to VR displays. 20

In contrast to previous studies, our survey does not target a particular display technology or application. This review aims to investigate the entire foveated rendering research spectrum, focusing on characterizing the classes of optimization methods employed and showing their specializations to different settings, from near-eye displays to large high-resolution displays and application domains.

28 3. Background

Foveated rendering, similarly to other approximate rendering techniques, aims to optimize various aspects of the rendering process by exploiting the peculiar characteristics of the human visual system. In this section, we provide relevant background information to create a common ground for concepts and conventions used in the rest of the paper.

35 3.1. Human eye and vision

The human visual system (HVS) is a complex biological 36 system that contains 70% of all photoreceptors and four 37 billion neurons. Almost half of the primary visual cortex 38 is engaged in vision [48] in which 25% is devoted to pro-39 cessing data from central visual angle (2.5°) [101]. The 40 eye works as a vision sensor that allows light rays to pass 41 to the retina through an adjustable iris, being refracted by 42 the cornea and a crystalline lens using six different muscle 43 movements [45, 244]. The retina consists of three types 44 of photoreceptors: rods, cones, and retinal ganglion cells, 45 which convert the light signal into an electrical signal. The 46 optical nerves work as *information bus* which transmit vi-47 sual signals from the retina to the visual cortex with an 48 estimated bandwidth of 10 Mbps [22]. The rods are highly 49 light-sensitive and even can be activated by a single pho-50 ton. Cones are, on the other hand, less light-sensitive but 51 pass color and detailed visual cues to the visual cortex for 52 further processing. 53

There are approximately 120 million rods, six million 54 cones, and 24-60 thousand photosensitive retinal ganglion 55 cells [43]. Noteworthy, these numbers may vary in differ-56 ent studies, e.g., Kaplanyan et al. [106] suggest 4.6 million 57 cones. The cones have a high density around the cen-58 ter of the optical axis known as the fovea; around 1.50 59 mm in diameter [198]. Different studies have revealed dis-60 tinct foveal angles in between $2^{\circ} - 5.2^{\circ}$ around the opti-61 cal axis [80, 156, 173]. The HVS processes the highest 62 acuity of contrast, color, and depth information in the 63 fovea [26]. The neighboring regions in a circle of up to 64 8° is called parafovea, and up to 17° perifovea. Exceed-65 ing that begins the peripheral region [190, 121], which can 66 be further classified as near, mid, and far peripheral (see 67 Fig. 3) [16]. Most foreated rendering solutions differen-68 tiate among the central foveal region, where most of the 69 rendering effort is concentrated, and the rest of the field-70 of-views [80, 156, 173]. 71



Fig. 3. The foveal angle varies between studies. However, most studies mention from $\pm 2^{\circ}$ to $\pm 5.2^{\circ}$ around the optical axis [80, 156, 173]. Neighboring regions in a circle of size of 8° is called parafovea, and up to 17° perifovea. Exceeding that begins the peripheral region [190, 121], which can be further classified into near (until $\pm 30^{\circ}$ around the optical axis), mid (from $\pm 30^{\circ}$ to $\pm 60^{\circ}$), and far (from $\pm 60^{\circ}$ to $\pm 105^{\circ}$) periphery [16]. Human vision roughly spans $\pm 105^{\circ}$ horizontally around the gaze direction when the head is stable [11]

3.2. Field of view

The human vision spans roughly $210^{\circ} \times 135^{\circ}$ [11]; how-73 ever, this measure with a steady focus of the eves. The 74 stereoscopic vision is composed of two monocular visions, 75 which the brain stitches together. Each eye has roughly 76 $162^{\circ} - 165^{\circ}$ monoscopic field of view (FOV), and $\approx 114^{\circ}$ 77 overlap region [80]. Nonetheless, with head rotation, hu-78 mans can see almost $270^\circ-290^\circ$ horizontal arc. However, 79 physically, humans can roughly observe only around 90° 80 in as little as 1/10 second during saccades and can follow 81 moving objects at speed up to $180^{\circ}/s$ [50]. Under a near-82 eve VR display, the immersion consistently begins from 83

1 ($\approx 80^{\circ}$) FOV and steadily grows up with higher angle [118] 2 whereas higher eccentricity raises the risk of motion sick-3 ness. Furthermore, there is an existing research challenge 4 between FOV and angular resolution. The increment of 5 FOV lowers the angular resolution which may easily per-6 ceivable by the viewers.

7 3.3. Eye movement estimation

The eye movements, such as saccades, smooth pursuit, vergence and accommodation. and vestibulo-ocular moveq ments directly affect human perception [142]. The sac-10 cades are the rapid ballistic eye motions that suddenly dis-11 rupt intervals of fixation and lead the fovea to the scene's 12 region of interest (ROI), and lasts 10-100 ms exceeding 13 $300^{\circ}/s$ [53, 181, 142, 150]. Perceptual changes during brief 14 saccades are barely detectable by humans [187]. Smooth 15 pursuit is active during eves track a moving object with 16 detectable velocity. Vergence and accommodation refer 17 to the eve's fixation process, in which the ciliary muscles 18 change the crystalline lens's refractive potential to reduce 10 the volume of a blur for the fixated depth of the scene 20 [89]. Vestibulo-ocular movement occurs while the eve is 21 locked on an ROI, but the head moves. For more details 22 about eye movements, see [181]. However, eyes only cap-23 ture visual stimuli during *fixations* that stand 200-400 ms. 24 During this phase, the eyes stay stationary in the ROI. 25 The fixation follows two oculomotor functions: rotation of 26 the eyes as such the ROI falls on the two eyes' fovea, and 27 then optimize the crystalline lens adjustment so that the 28 retinal images become sharp [121]. Moreover, the image 29 needs to be updated within 5 ms of fixation; otherwise, 30 the observer may detect the low-resolution image due to 31 foveated degradation [134, 38]. 32

33 3.4. Eye tracking

Eve-tracking is a technique that detects user's eves 34 and calculates where or what they are looking at. The 35 point where the user is looking is referred to as the *gaze* 36 *point*. Modern eye trackers mainly rely on an infrared light 37 source and video cameras to track black pupil circles and 38 the white corneal glint, which is a projection of infrared 39 rays from the outer surface of the cornea. During eye 40 movement, the pupil follows the gaze direction, while the 41 corneal reflection remains unaffected. The camera-based 42 eve tracking systems can be categorized as near-eve vs. 43 remote, on-axis vs. off-axis, model vs. regression-based, 44 single vs. multi-camera input (see [110]). Duchowski et 45 al. [215] classify gaze tracking into active, passive, single, 46 and multi-modal. Besides, the *accuracy* of eye trackers is 47 defined as the average distance between the real-stimuli 48 position and the measured gaze position [16, 142]. 49

⁵⁰ 3.5. Latency requirement

The higher precision and lower latency are of utmost importance for an optimized foveated rendering. Higher latency increases discomfort (i.e., simulation sickness, fatigue), perceptional degradation visibility, and artifacts [242]. The motion-to-photon (MTP) delay, a.k.a., end-toend latency, consists of tracking latency and frame latency; defined as the time between capturing an eye/gaze movement and the frame reflection associated with the display change. The frame reflection is the duration between the GPU and the display, is generally half of the MTP delay. In modern graphics pipelines, 5 ms or less frame latency for stereo VR and 16-33 ms for gaming PCs are achievable [105].

Guenter et al. [80] suggest that VR has an optimal la-64 tency of 23 ms or less, but 40 ms or more is a delayed la-65 tency. Similarly, Albert et al. [8] recommend 20-40 ms as 66 the most suitable value for latency for VR, while 50-70 ms 67 is somehow tolerable, and 80-150 ms or more is unaccept-68 able. On the contrary, Stengel et al. [203] report, 50-91 ms 69 is the tolerable threshold. Li et al. [129] strongly suggest. 70 for foveated rendering, the MTP delay should be less than 71 50 ms. Likewise, Stengel et al. [204] recommend the la-72 tency should never exceed 60 ms. Arabadzhiyska et al. [14] 73 report that HVS sensitivity is fully restored within 40-60 74 ms after the saccade ends. Therefore, the frame should 75 be updated within that time frame. In contrast, other au-76 thors [38, 105] report that the image should be updated 77 within 5 ms after a saccade to avoid artifacts. Romer et 78 al. [189] also suggest, for 360° video streaming, the la-79 tency should be approximately 20 ms. Similarly, Koskela 80 et al. [118] report the latency for immersive applications 81 should be less than 20 ms, which is further supported by 82 the experiment [116] that use 14 ms latency under VR. 83 However, Patney et al. [173] use 20-37 ms tracking latency 84 in addition to the frame latency in their experiment. The 85 figure 4 shows an overview of MTP delay which has been 86 observed in multiple studies for VR applications. 87

Besides the MTP delay, pixel-row-update adds a con-88 siderable amount of latency to the desktop monitor. In 89 the early 1990s, the MTP delay of 100-150 ms was more 90 common for volumetric visualization [127]. However, the 91 recent progress of processing power can remarkably lower 92 that latency. Thunström's [218] study suggests that up to 93 42 ms latency is tolerable for 95% of the subjective stud-94 ies with desktop monitors, whereas Loschky et al. [135] 95 report 60 ms should be the standard. To sum up, for im-96 mersion, the best MTP delay should be < 5 ms, and on 97 average < 20 ms. Moreover, the MTP delay should never 98 cross 50 ms regardless of display technologies. In addition, 99 researchers have determined that the peripheral degrada-100 tion at longer latencies (80-150 ms) must be reduced with 101 respect to the amount considered acceptable at shorter la-102 tencies (50-70 ms), since the additional latency increases 103 the likelihood of the viewer noticing visual artifacts in the 104 peripheral area [135]. 105

3.6. Visual acuity

Visual acuity or clarity of vision is described either as the Snellen value or Minimum Angle of Resolution (MAR). The normal visual acuity is defined as 20/20 Snellen value, equivalent to 1 arc minute in MAR in the

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Fig. 4. Overview of Motion-to-photon (MTP) observed in different studies on VR applications. The studies are arranged from left to right from the smallest to the largest observed delay. In blue (5-20ms), we depict the best cases, in green the average case (around 40ms), and in red the worst cases (above 50ms). These thresholds are the average suggested thresholds indicated in the literature.

fovea [204, 206, 85]. Current foveated rendering research
 considers this normal visual acuity as a standard for dis play design. However, since, in realty, average viewers can

barely achieve half of the maximum visual acuity, the most

⁵ readable visual contents are designed for visual acuity of

₆ 20/40. Spjut et al. [102] suggest that 20/40 visual acuity

7 should also be the standard for foveated rendered displays.

However, Behnam et al. [22] report that commercial VR
displays at the time of their survey (2017) hardly provide

 $_{10}$ 20/90 visual acuity.

Studies tried to establish a relation (see Equation 1) of visual acuity fall-off from the visual axis [80]:

$$\omega_{cpd} = \omega_0 + m \cdot e \tag{1}$$

Here, ω_0 , e, and m denote the smallest resolvable angle in 11 cycle per degree (cpd), eccentricity in degrees, and slope 12 respectively. The MAR model has been shown to fit low-13 level vision task findings as well as anatomical characteris-14 tics of the retina. Inverting the visual acuity results in 15 the MAR as a linear model [245]. The minimum dis-16 cernible MAR increases linearly with eccentricity $20^{\circ} - 30^{\circ}$ 17 [203, 80, 243, 238]. However, according to few other stud-18 ies, e.g., [206, 36, 67] visual acuity is subject to hyperbolic 19 fall-off. 20

²¹ 3.7. Contrast sensitivity function (CSF)

Unlike visual acuity, contrast sensitivity (CS) characterizes different aspects of visual function. Clinical trials often do not include CS in addition to visual acuity tests. Contrast is a difference in luminance, typically the difference in reflected light levels between adjacent points. CS function (CSF), expressed in cpd units, refers to the number of samples that can be discerned at a particular distance from the foveation point. It is defined as the reciprocal of the minimum contrast threshold (CT) to perceive a sinusoid of spatial frequency f, at different eccentricities e [72, 198, 260] (see Equation 2):

$$CS(f,e) = \frac{1}{CT(f,e)}$$
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Humans can perceive with a resolution of 60-65 cpd in the fovea [200, 169, 7], gratings as fine as 1 arc-minute per pixel [216, 8] or equivalent of 120 pixels per degree (ppd) [98]. Interestingly, Cuervo et al. [50] report that humans with corrected vision have better than normal vision and the visual acuity ranges between 0.3-1 arc-minute (\approx 60-200 ppd). However, clinically 30 cpd has been considered as standard [110, 247].

Researchers have different views about the visual sensitivity fall-off with eccentricity. Weier et al. [244] suggest acuity reduces by 75% at an eccentricity 6°, whereas few studies recommend, after 20°, the sensitivity is reduced ten times [201, 143]. Similarly, Watson et al. [231] suggest that by 20° eccentricity, the human visual system can no longer resolve gratings narrower than 7.5 arc-minute per pixel. According to Akşit et al. [7], after 35°, the angular resolution drops to about 2.5 cpd, although Reddy et al. [184] recommend, the minimum visual acuity humans can perceive in the periphery is 8 cpd.

3.8. Adaptation effects

It is often reported that the HVS is sensitive to contrast 42 in luminance ranging from $10^{-6} cd/m^2$ (objects viewed 43 under illumination from the stars) to $108cd/m^2$ (objects 44 viewed on a bright sunny day) [186]. However, the instan-45 taneous dynamic range is much lower, as it is limited to 46 4 orders of magnitude, with lower luminance perceived as 47 noise, and higher luminance as over saturated uniform ar-48 eas [146]. This is because humans extend their dynamic 49 range by adapting to changes in the ambient luminance 50 by moving as detailed vision windows along the luminance 51 axis. Interestingly, adaptation is performed according to 52 the luminance perceived in an area covering about one 53 degree around the gaze direction, which is, however, fre-54 quently changing, also because of saccades [86]. Since the 55 process of luminance adaptation is slower than gaze direc-56 tion changes, as noted by Mantiuk et al. [146], in most sit-57 uations the HVS is permanently in a maladaptation state. 58

4. Overview and classification

As discussed in detail in Sec. 3, the fovea centralis captures finer details than those captured in the periphery. By exploiting this, foveated rendering techniques achieve optimization by nonuniformly distributing the rendering effort, in particular by lowering the rendering fidelity in noncentral areas.



Fig. 5. The overall landscape of foveated rendering techniques (Sec. 5-8). The table focuses on methods, while applications are discussed distinctly in Sec. 9

. Each cited reference is assigned to the main class of technique. We further differentiate on whether it was originally applied for a static or dynamic gaze tracking and implemented for a ray tracing or ray casting pipeline.

Researchers have classified the foveated techniques in different categories, e.g., experimental cognitive, algorithmic, and hardware approach [90]. Regarding peripheral degeneration, Watson et al. [233, 235] recommend geometric model, lighting-shading, texture, and window different resolution. Accordingly, Swafford et al. [210] suggest four possible quality degradations in periphery: resolution, screen-space ambient occlusion, tessellation, and ray-casting steps. Similarly, Arabadzhiyska et al. [14] propose spatial resolution, level of detail, and color can be 10 reduced in the periphery. Wang et al. [229] report that 11 geometry simplification, filter, and multi-resolution can be 12 applied to the periphery; however, this study is limited to 13 video compression. 14

Our classification depicted in Figure 5 strives to seek 15 commonality among rendering approaches. The main dif-16 ferentiation is among the types of degradation that are per-17 formed (Sec. 4.1). For each of these main classes, we fur-18 ther differentiate on whether the technique was originally 19 proposed for a situation in which the gaze was assumed 20 static or dynamic (Sec. 4.2). Finally, we also differentiate 21 on whether the technique was originally implemented for 22

a ray-based or a raster-based pipeline (Sec. 4.3).

In the following, we first provide general information on this classification. In the following sections, we will build on our classification to provide an in-depth analysis of the various methods that have been proposed in the literature. 27

4.1. Main classes of peripheral degradation

From a rendering method point of view, the fundamental differentiation is the type of adaptation that is performed. On this basis, we classify foveated rendering into four groups, depending on the type of peripheral degradation that is performed:

- *adaptive resolution* techniques work mainly in image space to reduce image density in the periphery (Sec. 5); these techniques include general-purpose approaches, as well as techniques tightly bound to specific display designs (*called Hardware-oriented* in this survey);
- geometric simplification techniques work instead, in model space, by adapting the complexity of rendered 3D models contributing to different areas of the display (Sec. 6);

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shading simplification and chromatic degradation
 techniques reduce, by contrast, the work per pixel,
 simplifying the quality of illumination simulation or
 chromatic fidelity (Sec. 7);

spatio-temporal deterioration, finally, improves performance by adapting the refresh rate of pixels across the image, eventually reusing information from previous frames for less important areas of the display (Sec. 8).

9 4.2. Static versus dynamic gaze point

Independently from the type of peripheral degradation 10 employed, foveated rendering assumes that there is knowl-11 edge of the gaze point, which determines how the effort 12 has to be distributed across the image. While the spe-13 cific type of solution used for obtaining this knowledge 14 is not of primary importance for the rendering methods, 15 some differentiation may exist among techniques that as-16 17 sume a static gaze point (e.g., at the center of the display), or techniques where the gaze point may dynamically vary 18 across frames (e.g., on the basis of eye-tracking or other 19 side information). For this reason, we distinguish between 20 methods using a static gaze point and methods using a 21 dynamic one. While we classify the presented techniques 22 based on the setting in which they were originally intro-23 duced, some of the static ones may adapt to dynamic set-24 tings, and vice-versa, with few adaptations. We will point 25 out these situations during the discussion. Nonetheless, 26 presenting this classification also provides a view of the 27 landscape of foveated rendering that shows the relative 28 importance, and the historical evolution of static and dy-29 namic setups. 30

Static foreated rendering schemes attempt to perform 31 perceptual optimization without any additional tracking 32 33 device. However, without gaze tracker, the typical assumption is that the user is looking at the center, and 34 that degradation might be applied at the periphery of the 35 image [183]. However, this is not a full-fledged technique, 36 as human vision simultaneously involves saccades and fix-37 ations of the scene. Nonetheless, static foveated rendering 38 techniques are still in widespread use, since they can be 39 applied in a wide range of situations. Commercial near-40 eve displays, e.g., Oculus Rift and StarVR, have adopted 41 this idea, sampling different regions with variable rates. It 42 should be noted that this variable-rate sampling is also im-43 portant to optimize rendering performance for these dis-44 plays, as it leads to throwaway peripheral pixels hardly 45 visible due to pincushion distortion. 46

On the other hand, more and more foreated rendering 47 schemes take into account a dynamic variation of gaze. 48 While methods relying on dynamic gaze variation can be 49 used without trackers, e.g., by assuming that the viewer is 50 following a particularly salient object, the large majority 51 of these schemes are developed in conjunction with some 52 tracking technology. Matthews et al. [150] differentiate eye 53 tracking from gaze tracking by stating that eye tracking 54 only measures eye movement, while gaze tracking tracks 55 the observer's head position to determine the actual gaze 56

point in the virtual world. In our work, we are not making fine differentiations, as we are interested in how the gaze position is exploited by optimized rendering algorithms. For this reason, we cover a wide range of trackers, e.g., *position tracker, optical tracker, face tracker* under the gaze tracker umbrella term.

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Depending on the purpose, the latest tracking hardware has either high accuracy and lower update frequency, or vice versa. Studies suggest that for optimizing foveated rendering, high frequency is more significant than high accuracy [16, 80]. Although few studies suggest that head tracking is adequate for noncritical purposes, as the human eye focuses closely on the head orientation $(\pm 15^{\circ} \text{ ra-}$ dius [20]), Lawrence et al. [64] report that, in VR applications, inaccuracies and latencies may lead to motion sickness and nausea. For this reason, applications like *immer*sion, cloud-based gaming explicitly require accurate and low latency tracking; hence, for foveated rendering an eye tracker appears as the best option for such cases. However, due to the viewing distance and relative motion between the viewer and the display, eve-tracking is inconvenient for large high-resolution display walls [26]. As an alternative, for such setups, *position* and *optical-tracker* give an approximate gaze position considering the observer's FOV with higher latency.

4.3. Ray-based versus raster-based techniques

Finally, the implementation of the degradation techniques may also vary depending on the rendering pipeline employed. In particular, while a large variety of combinations exist, ray-based techniques make it simpler to perform per-pixel adaptations, raster-based techniques typically favor model-space solutions. We, therefore, differentiate between ray-based and raster-based methods. Raybased and raster-based pipelines are directly available on modern programmable graphics hardware. Since foveated rendering requires real-time graphics, several pipelinespecific approaches have been implemented.

Typically, in foveated rasterization, the gaze point may be used to select geometric levels of detail for the displayed models, as well as an input for a fragment shader. The shader code will run a simplified fragment if it detects that the user is not looking at the current target pixel. These approaches make foveation easy to integrate with rasterization pipelines. Complications, however, arise from the implementation of realistic shadows, reflection, refraction, caustic effects, and global lighting, which often require the tuning of shadow mapping, reflection mapping, and other rendering techniques to cope with variable-resolution rendering [68].

On the other hand, the ray-based approaches are better applicable to photo-realistic graphics rendering since the path of the rays is computed pixel by pixel [243]. Optimization for foveated rendering is most often achieved by reducing the number of rays in non-foveal areas. Raybased techniques have shown the ability to easily simulate complex illumination patterns, but, in real-time settings, 112

such techniques require important resources, especially for 1 dynamic objects, due to the need of recomputing spatial indexing to achieve logarithmic complexity [160]. Foreation has shown to be an effective optimization technique due to the massive potential reduction in the number of rays. For foveated path tracing, Koskela et al. [118] provided a theoretical estimation of performance gains available and calculated that 94% of the path rays can be omitted. For this reason, they identified foreated rendering as an essential technique to use path tracing within VR applications. 10 With the evolution of graphics pipelines, however, the 11 boundary between rasterization and ray tracing is becom-12 ing more and more blurred. Rav-casting or even rav-13 tracing may be performed in fragment shaders, while ras-14 terization is often used for the view rays in a ray tracing 15 or path tracing solution. In our classification, we will, 16 nonetheless, conserve this distinction by presenting the 17 various techniques in the setting in which they were origi-18 nally introduced, eventually cross-linking similar ray trac-19 ing and rasterization techniques. By doing so, we aim to 20 provide a view of the evolving landscape of foreated ren-21 dering implementation frameworks. 22

5. Adaptive resolution 23

The first group of methods in our classification (Fig-24 ure 5) strives to reduce the peripheral resolution to ac-25 celerate the rendering process. This is the most com-26 mon approach in foveated rendering. Over time a wide 27 range of techniques has been developed, such as *adaptive* 28 sampling mask, multi-resolution pyramid, discrete cosine 29 transform (DCT), wavelet transform, log-polar transform. 30 log-rectilinear transform. The adaptive resolution is appli-31 cable on CPU, GPU, and even on a hybrid architecture. 32 Besides, both ray-based and rasterize graphics pipelines 33 have been used to reduce resolution, few techniques even 34 combine both pipelines. Unconventional approaches in-35 clude mostly dual display setup, e.g., inset-based projec-36 tion, overlapped region, and focus plus context. Recent 37 progress of AR displays, especially holographic, varifocal, 38 and light field displays rely heavily on the adaptive resolu-39 tion to reduce rendering load. However, *flickering*, *pop-up* 40 and other visual artifacts are often visible that require ad-41 ditional postprocessing. 42

In this section, we will survey the adaptive resolu-43 tion techniques according to our classification. A general 44 overview of the surveyed methods is presented in Table 1 45 for the general-purpose techniques, and in Table 3 for the 46 47 methods tightly bound to a specific hardware setup. In the following, we will first discuss each of the subclasses (see 48 Sec. 5.1–5.6), before summarizing our findings (Sec. 5.7). 49

5.1. Static ray-based techniques 50

Ray-based rendering techniques (see Table 1), such as 51 ray tracing, path tracing, and ray casting, are well adapted 52 to foveated rendering because of the adaptive sampling 53 control over the frame, high-quality shadows, reflections, 54

refraction, translucency, caustic effects, and other visual qualities.

Static real-time *foveated ray tracing* systems reduce spatial sampling by imitating the human non-uniform and sparse vision characteristics, typically assuming that the viewer is looking at the center of the display. This ap-60 proach is often used for near-eye displays. Fujita and Harada [69], for instance, developed a foveated ray tracer 62 for a headset, in which the sampling pattern is distributed with $\theta^{-2/3}$, where θ is the angular distance from the display center. To avoid artifacts due to sparse sampling, pixel colors are computed by averaging a set of neighboring samples in the image plane.

Pohl et al. [177], in a head-mounted display (HMD), 68 combined density reduction due to foveation with the fact 69 that lenses in modern consumer HMDs introduce distor-70 tions like astigmatism, in which only the center area of 71 the displayed content can be perceived sharp while, with 72 increasing distance from the center, the image gets increas-73 ingly blurred. This reduction is encoded in display-specific 74 precomputed static sampling maps, which are images that 75 encode the number of sampling rays per pixel (255 being 76 the maximum of allowed supersampling). Moreover, they 77 achieve considerable speed-up by combining density con-78 trol with image quality control. In particular, in addition 79 to lowering density inside areas, they employ high-fidelity 80 CPU ray tracing in the display center, and faster GPU-81 accelerated rasterization in the periphery. Moreover, pix-82 els that are very far from the center are not rendered upon 83 head motion, reusing pixels from previous frames to avoid 84 illumination changes [178]. This hybrid technique signifi-85 cantly improves the graphics quality at higher frame rates: 86 with user-specific calibration, the demonstrated rendering 87 speedup reached up to 77% on several benchmark scenes. 88 This method was later extended to dynamic gaze tracking 89 using an eye tracker [179] (Sec. 5.4). Recently, Yang et al. 90 [253] varied the ray tracing rate based on scene specific in-91 formation to reduce the number of shading samples. The 92 particular use case is the usage of path tracing for com-93 puting illumination in a deferred shading pipeline. Sample 94 rate is reduced by combining a foveation terms with terms 95 depending on BRDF complexity and distance to viewer. 96 Results demonstrate speed-ups of up to 30%. 97

Static foreation has also been used for other types of dis-98 plays. For instance, Wei and Sakamoto [238] use density 99 reduction to optimize rendering speed for an experimen-100 tal holographic display. Such a display technology simu-101 lates the recording part of traditional optical holography 102 by using a computer, saving light information as electronic 103 data called an interference pattern. This approach, how-104 ever, requires a large amount of calculation. Therefore, for 105 foveated rendering, instead of adapting pixel density, they 106 reduce the angular resolution of these calculations depend-107 ing on the distance from the look-at point, assumed at the 108 center of their display. Only the area within 5° to the cen-109 ter is rendered at full resolution, while the rest (up to 8° 110 on their experimental display) uses a lower angular sam-111

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Algorithm used	Deferences	Static	Dyna	mic	Pipeline	
Algorithm used	References		Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			tracker	tracker	based	based
Adaptive ray tracing	Fujita and Harada [69], Wei and	•	0	0	•	0
	Sakamoto $[238]$, Yang et al. $[253]$					
Adaptive ray tracing	Levoy and Whitaker [127], Siekawa et	0	•	0	•	0
	al. [201], Peuhkurinen and Mikkonen					
	[175]					
GPU-accelerated ray tracing	Weier et al. [242], Siekawa et al. [200]	0	•	0	•	0
Luminance aware rendering	Tursun et al. [223]	0	•	0	•	•
Dynamic sampling map	Pohl et al. $[179]$	0	•	0	•	0
Hybrid approach	Pohl et al. $[177]$	•	0	0	•	•
Hybrid approach	Pohl et al. $[180]$, Friston et al. $[68]$	0	•	0	•	•
Adaptive path tracing	Roth et al. $[192]$	0	0	Head	•	0
Path tracing in log-polar	Koskela et al. [117]	0	•	0	•	0
space						
Adaptive ray casting	Viola et al. [227]	•	0	0	•	0
Adaptive ray casting	Zhang et al. $[260]$, Bruder et al. $[36]$	0	•	0	•	0
Adaptive ray casting	Ananpiriyakul et al. [10]	0	0	Face	•	0

Table 1. Summary of different techniques developed to achieve adaptive resolution, similar approaches are grouped together. Methods tightly bound to a specific hardware setup are presented separately in Table 3

Head = head-tracker Face = face-tracker

¹ pling rate. The static setup makes it possible to exploit

² the precomputation of sampling patterns.

³ 5.2. Dynamic ray-based techniques

Dynamic techniques receive new gaze information at each frame and must update the display with low latency. The *first group* of techniques in this area is purely ray-6 based and achieves optimization by reducing the number of rays and reconstructing images from sparse samples. 8 Levoy and Whitaker [127] developed the earlier volumetq ric rendering with adaptive ray tracing, getting the gaze 10 points with an eye tracker. In the algorithm, depending 11 on the distance to the gaze point, three regions of a scene 12 are gradually sampled at 1, 1/2, and 1/4 of the native res-13 olution and then blended for generating a continuous final 14 rendered image. Similar approaches have been later used 15 for Whitted-style ray tracing of simple scenes [201]. 16

With the introduction of programmable graphics 17 pipelines, several more elaborate approaches were intro-18 duced, with the goal of having a finer control of ray gen-19 eration and reducing artifacts, especially at the periphery. 20 Siekawa et al. [200] use GPU-accelerated ray tracing with 21 four different sampling masks for a nonuniform distributed 22 set of pixels to reduce the number of traced rays. To reduce 23 flickering artifacts in the periphery, which is very coarsely 24 sampled, strong temporal anti-aliasing (TAA) is applied. 25 Peuhkurinen and Mikkonen [175], instead, distributed rays 26 according to a log-polar transformation rather than dis-27 crete masks and demonstrated ray-tracing for simple sinces 28 on mixed reality application. Likewise, Weier et al. [242] 29 combine GPU-accelerated ray tracing with a depth of field 30 filter (DOF). The ray-tracing step in the algorithm sam-31 ples the image sparsely based on a visual acuity model, 32

and then the temporal stability of peripheral image regions is enhanced using reprojection-based TAA. Finally, the complete image is computed from sparse samples using pull-push interpolation, and gaze-contingent DOF is computed as postprocessing. Although the model was originally developed for foveated artifact reduction, it also reduces shaded samples up to 70%.

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Tursun et al. [223] noted that, while previous foveated solutions reduce resolution purely as a function of eccentricity, human visual sensitivity is also strongly influenced by the displayed content. They thus studied the resolution requirements at different eccentricities as a function of luminance patterns, deriving a low-cost parameterized model. The model is used in a multipass rendering technique, which predicts the parameters from a low-resolution version of the current frame. As a result, the model proved to be capable, on benchmark scenes, to use only 47% of the rays to render the foveated region, without visual artifacts like pop-up effects and tunnel vision. For further speedup, variable-rate shading [205], which distributes shading samples over time, is also employed. The overall approach benefits from the flexibility of the CUDA block-wise architecture.

The second category of algorithms is hybrid approach in 56 which both ray tracing and rasterization have been com-57 bined for faster computation. Pohl et al. [180] noted 58 that when the user is not looking at the center of a head-59 mounted display, not all of the image is seen. User tests 60 showed that, in their particular configuration, on average, 61 57% pixels were typically invisible in the entire frame. In 62 a fully ray-traced pipeline, they skipped rays detected as 63 invisible, while in a rasterization pipeline the invisible pix-64 els are stenciled out, avoiding shading computation. The 65 study was then extended by combining rasterization at the
periphery with ray-tracing at the center [179], also including dynamic sampling maps and lens astigmatism [178].
For performance reasons, dynamic sampling maps are recomputed per frame depending on the current gaze at a low
resolution and interpolated to get the required amount of
rays per pixel. Taking into account the gaze point resulted
in a speedup of 20% with respect to the static solution.

Since multipass approaches are prone to introduce latency. Friston et al. [68] introduced a single-pass rendering 10 technique based on a single perceptual rasterization pass. 11 Their approach combines two solutions. First of all, they 12 implement rasterization into a frame buffer with a non-13 constant pixel density that peaks at the fovea. Each raster-14 ized pixel computes illumination with ray tracing. Second, 15 they update every column of pixels at different times. The 16 latter feature can be used on HMDs with rolling displays, 17 such as Oculus Rift DK2, that illuminate different spatial 18 locations at different times. As a result, they achieve a 19 performance similar to warping solutions, without the lim-20 itations with respect to disocclusions, object motion, and 21 view-dependent shading, while reducing the aliasing arti-22 facts of foveated techniques based on sparse ray sampling 23 at every frame. 24

A number of approaches generalize the above concepts 25 to foveated path tracing, the third category in our classi-26 fication, in which performance gains are achieved by con-27 trolling the shading complexity through the reduction in a 28 number of traced paths. As for the typical real-time path-29 tracing solution, the final image is generated by a denois-30 ing filter from the noisy result of path tracing. A notable 31 approach has been proposed by Roth et al. [192], based 32 on the NVIDIA OptiX framework. Their implementation 33 targets high-resolution displays in which the user's FOV 34 is precalculated, with more dense rays traced in the fovea 35 region, and sparser rays traced in the periphery, where a 36 Gaussian filter is also applied to blur the image to mask 37 aliasing problems. This third category is currently less ex-38 plored, mainly due to the difficulty of computing global 39 illumination in a very time-constrained setting with strict 40 latency bounds. A recent study by Koskela et al. [117] 41 implemented real-time path tracing in log-polar space. In 42 their benchmarks, both rendering and denoising achieved 43 a $2.5 \times in$ a VR setup. However, jittering effects could be 44 observed in both the fovea and periphery. 45

The *fourth set* of techniques is based on *foveated ray* 46 casting commonly used to render massive 3D models or 47 volumes. Ray casting is used here due to its flexibility and 48 efficiency in visibility computation in combination with 49 precomputed acceleration structures. The techniques used 50 in this area do not significantly differ from the previously 51 discussed solutions. Zhang et al. [260] present real-time 52 foveated ray casting base on adaptive sampling mask and 53 CSF with significant frame-rate improvement. Similarly, 54 Bruder et al. [36] develop ray casting technique derived 55 from Linde Buzo Gray sampling [54] and natural neighbor 56 interpolation that leverages visual acuity fall-off to speed 57

up volume rendering. Without any perceptible changes in 58 visual quality, this technique achieved speed up to 3.2 fold 59 on the presented benchmarks. Likewise, Ananpiriyakul 60 [10] apply adaptive ray casting on vector and volume vi-61 sualization in which the step size increases along with ec-62 centricity, resulting in faster computation and interaction 63 latency decline. Interestingly, the approach uses a face-64 tracker instead of conventional gaze-trackers. 65

Dynamic ray-based techniques for adaptive resolution are a well-researched and still very active area, where most of the literature in the 2014-2020 time frame were produced. This is because these techniques make it natural to finely and rapidly adapt sampling rates based on eccentricity and other measures. However, due to decreased ray density, artifacts like flickering are often visible in the periphery. Therefore, additional postprocessing, e.g., strong antialiasing [200, 242], and denoising [242] are essential.

5.3. Static raster-based techniques

Rasterization based techniques produce images by projecting the scenes on a regular grid. This regularity is exploited by several foreation methods to design specialized adaptive sampling and reconstruction techniques (see Table 2).

The *wavelet transformation* is, in particular, at the root 81 of the major rasterization-specific approaches to foveation. 82 In the wavelet domain, the images are decomposed into 83 different components and frequencies [141] in which each 84 level can represent the different scales of information. In 85 the context of foveation, wavelet representations are often 86 used to control the sampling rate both in image space, 87 to control the number of samples, and in object space, 88 to control the sampling. In particular, variable resolution 89 for foveated volumetric representations can be achieved by 90 controlling the number of wavelet coefficients. Chang et al. 91 [42] employ the Gaussian smoothing function as an integral 92 operator and analyze its kernel for achieving space-variant 93 degradation. Piccand et al. [176] develop volume data 94 visualization technique based on 3D Haar wavelet trans-95 formation. In this approach, the ROI is rendered at full 96 resolution, while contextual areas at coarser resolution are 97 rendered through wavelet splatting. One main drawback 98 of this method is that the contextual region pixelates due qq to the combination of Haar wavelets with splatting. Yu 100 et al. [258] render volume data using wavelet coefficients 101 under selected tracked rays. This is a two-step process: 102 rapid reconstruction of the super-voxels from wavelet coef-103 ficients, and then render the super-voxels by tracking rays 104 with different thicknesses. To reduce staircase artifacts, a 105 space-variant smoothing filter is applied. 106

Variable spatial resolution is also achieved by using standard rasterizers with different configurations in the various areas of the screen. A prominent example is the rendering framework proposed by Malkin et al. [140], that assembles the final image from square fragments rendered separately, each of which has been blurred according to the distance from its midpoint to the point of fixation. Such a decompo-

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Algorithm used	Poforonaos	Static	Dynamic		Pipeline	
Algorithm used	References		Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			$\operatorname{tracker}$	tracker	based	based
Wavelet transformation	Chang et al. [42], Yu et al. [258], Pic-	•	0	0	0	•
	cand et al. $[176]$					
CUDA opt. architecture	Malkin et al. [140]	•	0	0	0	•
Adaptive sampling	Vieri et al [226]	0	•	0	0	•
Adaptive sampling (3 layer)	Guenter et al. [80], Finch et al. [63],		•	0	0	•
	Marianos [148]					
Adaptive sampling	Cuervo and Chu [51]	0	0	Head	0	•
Adaptive sampling (2 layer)	Swafford et al. [209], Bektas et al. [27],	0	•	0	0	•
	Lungaro and Tollmar [138]					
Adaptive sampling (2 layer)	Watson et al. [235]	0	0	Mouse	0	•
Multi-layer pyramid	Perry and Geisler [72, 174, 73]	0	•	Mouse	0	•
Spatiotemporal filtering	Bohme et al. [34]	0	•	0	0	•
Log-polar transform	Meng et al. [156, 154, 155]	0	•	0	0	•
Log-rectilinear transform	Li et al. [128]	0	•	0	0	•

Table 2. Summary of different raster-based techniques developed to achieve adaptive resolution, similar approaches are grouped together.

Head = head-tracker holo = holographic display

sition into tiles allows for an efficient parallel CUDA-based
 implementation.

Rasterization-based techniques are also often used in
 conjunction with nonconventional display setups, such as
 near-eye displays or light-field display. Since most of these
 methods have been specifically designed to take into ac count display-specific features, they are described in a sep-

arate section on Hardware-oriented techniques (Sec. 5.5).

⁹ 5.4. Dynamic raster-based techniques

The most explored foreated rendering research area 10 comprises dynamic raster-based techniques that vary lo-11 cal image resolution in response to gaze changes (see Ta-12 ble 2). Due to the need for low-latency and high fre-13 quency display, these techniques must employ several op-14 15 timization schemes that permit fast adaptivity in conjunction with moving ROIs. In this section, we dis-16 cuss sub-sampling [80, 63, 148, 226, 51, 209], multi-layer 17 pyramid [72, 174, 73, 34], and log-polar transformation 18 [156, 154, 250, 128] which are used to achieve adaptive 19 resolution. 20

The first set of techniques is based on compositing dif-21 ferent resolution images to quickly produce a foveated dis-22 play. The most classic technique is to use a multi-pass ap-23 proach, in which several image layers around the tracked 24 gaze point are rendered at progressively higher angular 25 size but lower sampling rate, and then rescaled and com-26 posited to produce the final multi-resolution image. For 27 instance, Guenter et al. [80] introduced a multipass ras-28 terization pipeline for 3D graphics based on the acuity 29 fall-off model proposed by Levoy et al. [127], in which the 30 scene is rendered on three nested and overlapping render 31 targets centered around the current gaze point. The inner 32 layer is smallest in angular diameter and rendered at the 33 native display resolution, while the two peripheral layers 34

cover a progressively larger angular diameter but are ren-35 dered at a progressively lower resolution and bilinearly up-36 sampled before merging them with the others. Note that 37 this system also used coarser scene LODs for peripheral 38 layers (see Sec. 6) and updated them at half the tempo-39 ral rate (see Sec. 8). Through this approach, half of the 40 shading cost was saved with a 5-6 times overall graphics 41 performance improvement demonstrated on a desktop HD 42 display. The system was later extended for a 3×3 tiled 43 LCDs, demonstrating up to 10-15 times less rendering cost 44 with 6-8 times average speedup [63]. The reduction in the 45 density of peripheral layers leads to distracting strobing 46 and crawling artifacts and makes anti-aliasing based on 47 super-sampling harder. For this reason, the cost of anti-48 aliasing is also amortized over multiple frames, using a 49 combination of multisample antialiasing (MSAA), tempo-50 ral reverse reprojection [165], and temporal jitter of the 51 spatial sampling grid [49]. 52

Many follow-ups used the same architecture. For in-53 stance, Marinos [148] use three layers: 100%, 60%, and 54 40% resolution which depends on the Euclidean distance 55 from ROI. Likewise, Cuervo and Chu [51] investigate the 56 panoramic stereo video and likelihood-based features in 57 which the video is subdivided into three regions: high, 58 medium, and low resolution. An integrated convex-like 59 optimizer adapts to real-time head movement and reallo-60 cates pixels according to the motion. In contrast, instead 61 of three layers, Swafford et al. [209] use two sample lay-62 ers, full resolution in the fovea and 25% resolution in the 63 periphery. Lungaro and Tollmar [138] also employ dual 64 resolution on the video delivery framework by applying an 65 optimized foveal mask to each frame. Such a 2-layer ar-66 chitecture was also used in early user studies [235] that 67 demonstrated that lowering resolution in the periphery of 68 HMDs did not affect user performance on complex visual 69

search tasks. This multiple-image rendering architecture
is also used to drive recent VR displays, e.g., the very
high-resolution display by Vieri et al. [226], a 4.3" OLED
display with 18 megapixels/eye, and 120 Hz refresh rate.

Since reducing resolution is prone to introduce visible artifacts, other authors have presented architectures that improve image quality by supporting compositing and filtering of multiple images. The second group of methods 8 is used to create a space-variant resolution to the peripherv, is known as Multi-Layer Pyramid (MLP). Geisler et 10 al. [72] combine CSF with MLP for faster video commu-11 *nication* over low bandwidth networks. In this procedure, 12 the entire scene is divided into six levels, and each level 13 is then motion-compensated, multi-resolution coded, and 14 quantized based on HVS. Finally, lossless encoding and 15 foveated video quality assessment metrics have been in-16 tegrated into foveated compression algorithm. Similarly, 17 Perry and Geisler [174, 73] use MLP with filtering at each 18 pixel location, achieved by interpolation between levels 19 of the pyramid using the resolution map. Derived from 20 the gaze-directed spatial resolution function developed by 21 Perry and Geisler [174, 73], Böhme et al. [34] employ 22 a gaze-contingent spatiotemporal filtering technique that 23 uses a *resolution map* to specify the optimal temporal res-24 olution at the ROI. As a result, the authors claim smooth, 25 and artifact-free real-world video output. 26

While the above techniques partition the image into 27 a small set of discrete areas that are then composited, 28 an alternative approach is to directly produce a seam-29 less variable-rate image by warping the angular distribu-30 tion. The third category of algorithms is based on log-31 arithmic transformation. Meng et al. [156] develop the 32 kernel foveated rendering (KFR) technique in log-polar co-33 ordinate. In the method, first, a log-polar transforma-34 tion has applied in the buffer memory, and then inverse 35 log-polar transformation with anti-aliasing has applied to 36 reduce the resolution. However, in the presented bench-37 marks, the technique achieves 2.0-2.8 times speedup for 38 3D texture meshes and 2.9-3.2 fold better performance 39 than ray casting rendering on a 4K-UHD. In an exten-40 sion, Meng et al. [155] use eye dominant feature that 41 implements a lower foreation rate for the dominant eye 42 than the non-dominant. In comparison with KFR [156], 43 an additional 1.06-1.47 times speedup was achieved. In 44 another study, Meng et al. [154] extend the KFR to 3D 45 light field display. The 3D-KFR is parameter-dependent, 46 embedding polynomial kernel functions in the classic log-47 polar mapping. Nonetheless, there are two key research 48 challenges in KFR methods, first, the user-dependent opti-49 mized parameters that make it difficult for practical imple-50 mentation, and second, artifacts such as flickering are fre-51 quently visible. To reduce artifacts, Li et al. [128] use log-52 rectilinear foveated rendering. Results from this research 53 prove that log-rectilinear transformation with summed-54 area table sampling against log-polar transformation ef-55 fectively reduces flickering artifacts and saves bandwidth. 56

57 Other dynamic rasterization-based techniques have been

also developed to take into account the special characteristics of nonconventional displays. Those methods are described in a separate section on Hardware-oriented techniques (Sec. 5.6.

5.5. Static hardware-oriented techniques

While the approaches discussed so far are generalpurpose techniques for achieving variable resolution across images, several methods have been designed for particular displays with unconventional characteristics. These include, e.g., dual displays [77, 78, 3], varifocal displays [247, 256], and holographic displays [85, 139, 123, 100]. Here and in the following section, we cover such hardwareoriented approaches to achieve adaptive resolution, focusing in particular on how raster-based and ray-based techniques have been adapted to those configuration (see Table 3). In this section, we will first focus on static configurations with a fixed gaze point, while in the next we will cover the dynamic case.

The first set of techniques uses a physical dual-display 76 setup to achieve variable resolution. A typical design is 77 the earlier foveated dual display approaches, which were 78 mainly inset-based, with higher resolution at the center 79 and coarser resolution elsewhere. On these displays, ren-80 dering techniques typically need to perform two renderings 81 and take into account continuity between the presented 82 images. Godin et al. [77, 78] designed a dual-resolution 83 foveated stereoscopic projection setup that superimposed 84 images with opposing polarization that is suitable for ex-85 ploring large models and environments consists of high ge-86 ometric and texture complexity (the display setup targeted 87 over 10 megapixels). However, there are few downsides, 88 e.g., color, resolution, brightness variation, and the line be-89 tween different projectors. Therefore, image warping is ap-90 plied as a part of the rendering pipeline to overcome these 91 challenges. Ahlborn et al. [3] introduce a multi-projector 92 wall where the coarser-resolution is projected from a rear 93 projector. To modify the OpenGL pipeline without mod-94 ifying application code, they implemented the inset con-95 troller as a Chromium SPU. Another front projector with 96 a mechanical *pan-tilt mirror* projects small though high-97 resolution images overlapped. Baudisch et al. [24, 23] de-98 velop a focus plus context (FPC) display in which foveation qq is possible during image acquisition. Besides, Shimizu 100 [199] develops an advanced wide-angle foveated (AdWAF) 101 model that uses an especial lens to distort the acquired 102 image geometrically into four regions by combining both 103 Cartesian and logarithmic coordinates. As compared to a 104 log-polar model, the AdWAF model minimizes image data 105 by more than 13%. 106

The second set of techniques is explicitly developed for near-eye image presentation. Sometimes, displays in this category are explicitly designed taking into account foveation in their design, but no particular rendering technique is required, besides taking into account the fixed variable angular resolution of the display. One example is the varifocal AR display of Wu and Kim [247], which

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Algorithm used	Beferences Stati		Static Dynamic		Pipeline	
Algorithm used	Itelefences		Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			$\operatorname{tracker}$	tracker	based	based
Multi-layer point cloud (holo)	Hong et al. $[85]$, Hong et al. $[100]$	•	0	0	0	•
Phase-only (holo)	Maimone et al. [139]	•	0	0	0	•
Multi-layer with PSF (holo)	Lee et al. $[123]$	•	0	0	0	•
Multi-layer (var)	Wu and Kim [247]	•	0	0	0	•
Geometric phase lens	Yoo et al. [256]	•	0	0	0	•
Dual projector	Godin et al. [77, 78], Staadt et al. [3]	•	0	0	0	•
Focus plus context	Baudisch et al. $[24, 23]$	•	0	0	0	•
Wide angle lens	Shimizu [199]	•	0	0	0	•
Electronic circuit board	Park et al. $[169]$, Bae et al. $[18]$	0	•	0	0	•
Adaptive resolution (var)	Kim et al. [110]	0	•	0	0	•
Dual display	Benko et al. [28]	0	•	0	0	•
Dual display	Tan et al. [213, 214]	0	•	PBPD	0	•
Dual layer LCDs	Gao et al. [71]	0	•	0	0	•

Table 3. Summary of different hardware-oriented techniques developed to achieve adaptive resolution, similar approaches are grouped together.

PBPD = Pancharatnam-Berry Phase Deflector var = varifocal display holo = holographic display

allows retrofitting a medically prescribed lens with a vari-1 focal lens for vision correction. Remarkably the prototype 2 can achieve angular resolution up to 22 cpd for the virtual 3 image at the center (6°) where the rest see-through display 4 has a uniform 32 cpd resolution. Another typical exam-5 ple in this category is the near-eye display of Yoo et al. 6 [256], which uses a fixed high resolution at the fovea and a 7 lower resolution in the periphery, exploiting polarization-8 dependent doublet geometric phase lens and temporal po-9 larization multiplexing methods to produce the images. 10

Holographic displays, with respect to standard binoc-11 ulars, use wavefront modulation to offer full depth cues. 12 13 These displays require large amounts of computation to compute the diffraction patterns, and using adaptive reso-14 lution is essential. The first set of solutions perform holo-15 gram synthesis in real-time from 3D point clouds using 16 17 the Rayleigh-Sommerfeld diffraction formula. To achieve foveation, the data is represented as a multilayered point 18 cloud, in which each layer has a different density accord-19 ing to MAR[85]. This model was then adapted to combine 20 the holographic and two-dimensional displays to provide 21 3D images near the fovea and 2D images at the periph-22 ery [100]. Moreover, the point cloud is upsampled in the 23 periphery to avoid holes. Maimone et al. [139] concen-24 trated, instead of the design of a *phase-only* holographic 25 projection with a spatial light modulator, showing how 26 true 3D holograms can be generated directly from the 27 output of the standard graphics pipeline through a post-28 processing step. In particular, they introduce a real-time 29 computation method based on linearly separable convo-30 lution to achieve spatially variant focus and aberration 31 correction for eye-tracked displays. The prerequisite for 32 high-speed computation is a spatially invariant lens phase 33 function, which implies that the focus and aberration cor-34 rection is constant over the image. Foreation is exploited 35 by providing the correct lens function where the user is 36

looking rather than computing or approximating the full spatially variant solution.

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Multi-layered displays, by contrast, can provide continu-39 ous focus cues within a working range by decomposing 3D 40 scenes into 2D layer images, that can be presented through 41 a variety of optical designs. Lee et al. [123] use for that 42 purpose a light guide and a holographic lens. The major 43 problem for such displays is to compute the layer images 44 and computationally optimizing them to provide appro-45 priate focus cues. Instead of using simple depth-weighted 46 blended, per-image weights are optimized by comparing 47 perceived retinal images with target retinal images accord-48 ing to the focal depth of the eyes. Foveation and eye move-49 ment are taken into account by minimizing the degradation 50 of contrast within the fovea while considering a large eye 51 box enlarging the eve box that takes into account possible 52 eye movements. Contrast ratio curves and visual differ-53 ences (HDR-VDP2) [145] are used for that purpose. The 54 method has the drawback of being very sensitive to calibra-55 tion and requires important computation resources, with 56 the prototype achieving 10Hz for a 700×350 retinal image 57 on an NVIDIA board. 58

5.6. Dynamic hardware-oriented techniques

A number of specialized hardware solutions to create 60 displays that adapt resolution based on user's gaze. The 61 first set of techniques is based on physical dual displays, 62 complementing the dual display solutions presented in sec-63 tion 5.3 with components dedicated to dynamic gaze track-64 ing. As for the static case, the only notable variations in 65 terms of rendering algorithms are related to aspects needed 66 to cope with particular display features. A typical exam-67 ple is given by Benko et al. [28], who couple a tracked 68 optical see-through display with a projector-based spatial 69 AR display. Their multipass approach renders the scene 70 five times: twice for the glasses (once for each eye), once 71

for the projected periphery, once for the projected inset, 1 and once for the projection mapping and compositing process for the projector view. The projected inset renders occlusion shadows for the glasses content or only shows the surface shaded content that is not view-dependent. Visual discontinuities are reduced by applying a smooth transition between the periphery and the inset. Similar multi-pass rendering techniques can be applied to the display design of Tan et al. [213, 214], who achieve the realization multi-resolution foreated display panel with a 10 combination of two separate OLED panels and a beam 11 splitter which is used as an optical combiner. The first 12 monitor has a wide FOV but low resolution, while the 13 second display has super high resolution in the central 14 region (25°) . For dynamic foreation, a switchable liquid 15 crystal-based Pancharatnam-Berry Phase Deflector is ap-16 plied that shifts the high-resolution regions with contents. 17 However, the *Pancharatnam-Berry Phase Deflector* can be 18 replaced with an eye tracker. As for Benko et al. [28], each 19 physical display is handled by a different rendering pass. 20

The second set of techniques is developed to achieve 21 foveated resolution through *electronics circuit*. Park at 22 [169] assumes that the renderer performs a vertical al. 23 resolution reduction depending on the Euclidean distance 24 from the gaze point, while keeping the horizontal resolu-25 tion fixed. A specialized circuit using multiple line driving 26 gate drivers then decompresses the image for display. Sub-27 jective assessment, PSNR, and SSIM indexes proved that 28 the foveation-based driving scheme can be used without 29 causing any noticeable deterioration. Since the display 30 Rendering techniques must be aware of display resolution 31 to suitably distribute pixel samples. Bae et al. [18] per-32 form instead an adaptation in both horizontal and vertical 33 direction by proposing a variable clock generation circuit to 34 manipulate output waveforms of shift registers for OLED 35 display. The electromagnetic circuit, which is made up 36 of four thin-film transistors and one capacitor, generates 37 pulses with variable widths that correspond to twelve res-38 olutions in the display region. The above-mentioned ren-39 dering method can be directly employed to speed up the 40 rendering for these variable resolution displays. 41

The *third group* of foreated techniques is designed for 42 unconventional displays, such as *light field*, and *varifocal* 43 displays. In contrast to conventional near-eve displays, 44 these displays can create better visual cues and an immer-45 sive experience. Gao et al. [71] combine dual-layer LCDs 46 and magnifying lenses to develop a *light field display*. In 47 the system, a *Hadamard product* [112] of two-layer patterns 48 is used to restore the light field scene. Besides, the LCDs 49 need to be flipped vertically, and the optical distortions 50 are calculated in post-processing. Kim et al. [110] design a 51 state-of-the-art foreated varifocal AR display in which the 52 resolution and focal depth cues are driven by eye-tracking. 53 Besides, the display combines a traveling microdisplay, a 54 concave half-mirror magnifier, and a laser projector-based 55 Maxwellian-view display. Since the overlap between the 56 fovea and periphery is visible, a *stencil mask* to the outer 57

paths of the foveal image is used.

5.7. Discussion

Achieving adaptive resolution through foreated render-60 ing is a wide research domain. One common use of foveated 61 rendering is to subsample various regions of a scene to dif-62 ferent resolutions and blend them. The number of layers 63 used in various studies varies, for example, two [209, 51], 64 three [80, 63, 148], and even six layers [72] have been used. 65 Further, a distinct subsampling ratio also has been applied. 66 However, the 1, 1/2, 1/4 sampling rate for three layers by 67 [127] have been widely adopted in [80, 238]. Nonetheless, 68 these techniques are not free from artifacts like flickering 69 and require strong TAA in post-processing. Among other 70 algorithms, the wavelet transformation [42, 258, 176] suf-71 fers from sudden pixelation, and consequently smoothing 72 filtering like Gaussian is required. Along with other as-73 pects, the log-polar transformation [156, 155, 250] calcula-74 tion is parameter-dependent, and a time-consuming user 75 study is prerequisite for optimization. 76

Since ray-based methods allow arbitrary sampling patterns in screen space, foveated techniques can apply more easily than rasterization. Due to the GPU robustness and affordable price, the foveated ray tracing has gained much interest in recent years [69, 238, 201]. Moreover, the CUDA architecture that supports the implementation of both ray tracing [223], and rasterization [140] through general-purpose parallel programming techniques offers large flexibility. In recent years, the boundary between rasterization and ray tracing is becoming more and more blurred, and hybrid approaches are emerging [68, 177].

While foreation can be applied to standard displays, 88 it is increasingly employed in conjunction with new tech-89 nologies such as varifocal, light field, and holographic dis-90 plays. There are several advantages of these displays; e.g. 91 achieving continuous visual cues, and solutions for ver-92 gence and accommodation conflict that lead to fatigue for 93 near-eye 2D displays with OLED/LCD. Among other ad-94 vantages, the varifocal AR display can reach large FOVs 95 (e.g., $85^{\circ} \times 78^{\circ}$) coupled with high angular resolution (e.g., 96 60 cpd angular resolution in the fovea [110, 247], while 97 more traditional displays are typically much more limited 98 (e.g., achieving a maximum 40° FOV and 10-15 cpd of anqc gular resolution). However, several key research challenges 100 exist in unconventional displays. In particular, most of the 101 holographic, varifocal, light field display research is lim-102 ited to static foveation, however, and dynamic foveation 103 solutions have started to appear only recently [110, 103]. 104 The rendering complexity for these displays (especially for 105 holographic ones) is also very high, and most presented so-106 lutions are limited typically to simple scenes using simple 107 shading models, most of the time demonstrated in stan-108 dard rasterization pipelines (see table 1). Extending these 109 displays to the photorealistic rendering of complex scenes 110 is an open research challenge. 111

Dual-display setups are a very common solution found in foveated rendering. Projection-based dual display setups

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emerged as a viable solution to achieving higher resolution
through projection on large screens. However, at present,
this solution is being employed more and more frequently
for near-eye displays, which use the technique to combine
a large resolution at the fovea with a wide FOV (e.g., [28, 213, 214].

7 6. Geometric simplification

The second group of methods in our classification (Figure 5), instead of, or in addition to, reducing image resq olutions, strives to improve performance by adapting 3D 10 geometric complexity. This approach is essential since the 11 geometric complexity of detailed scenes heavily impacts 12 the rendering time. Model simplification, or level of detail 13 (LOD), was among the earliest techniques used in con-14 junction with foreation. It is based on the observation 15 16 that much of the complexity in a realistic 3D model is redundant when rendering the model from a given per-17 spective since individual details may become too small to 18 be perceived [137]. Standard adaptive rendering technique 19 vary density based on factors such as distance, size, veloc-20 ity, and eccentricity [149], as well as semantics, and frame 21 rate[70]. For techniques may be employed in isola-22 tion or in conjunction with these other approaches. Nowa-23 days, gaze-tracked geometric simplifications are among the 24 most widely used techniques to accelerate the rendering 25 process[219]. Table 4 provides an overview of the differ-26 ent geometric simplification techniques used in foveated 27 rendering. In the following, we will summarize the vari-28 ous subclasses of geometric simplification techniques and 29 provide a general discussion of the state-of-the-art in this 30 area. 31

32 6.1. Ray-based techniques

Ray-based techniques typically use acceleration struc-33 tures, which achieve a rendering time that depends log-34 arithmically on scene complexity. For this reason, geo-35 metric simplification is typically used only on very large 36 scenes, and only a few studies explored ray-based meth-37 ods for reducing geometric complexity in conjunction with 38 foreation, especially in the case of dynamic gaze tracking. 39 A representative example is given by the work of Weier et 40 al. [241, 240], proposing a ROI-based geometric simplifi-41 cation model for large high-resolution display. The focus 42 area is detected by tracing rays from the detected user po-43 sition and intersecting the central viewing cone with the 44 display. Since the display plane is seen at an angle, the 45 authors model the focus area as an ellipse rather than a 46 circle. Multi-resolution rendering is implemented by using 47 the inner nodes of a *sparse voxel octree* data structure [122] 48 as approximate representation, and the polygonal nodes of 49 the original scene as a high-detail approximation. Due to 50 the difficulty of rebuilding the sparse voxel octree on the 51 fly, the system is tested only on static scenes. To indi-52 vidually decide when to stop traversing, a metric based 53 on the distance of the ray to the central ellipse is used.

Since hard transitions between levels are disturbing, the 55 image at the periphery is blurred with a Gaussian filter 56 with a fixed width. Similar user position-based LOD is 57 also used in a rasterization pipeline by Scheel et al. [195] 58 which is discussed in the next section. Other solutions, 59 instead, produce continuous images by continuously vary-60 ing the ray density and geometric LODs as a function of 61 eccentricity. A representative example is given by the ap-62 proach of Murphy and Duchowski [163]. In their approach, 63 the scene geometry is sampled by ray casting, with a ray 64 distribution conforming to the angular frequency dictated 65 by a Contrast Sensitivity Function (CSF). This sampling 66 generates an intermediate mesh, which is then further re-67 fined to preserve silhouette edges and rendered in place of 68 the original geometry. One notable finding from this study 69 is that the search time decreases with the foveated window 70 size increment (up to 10° eccentricity). 71

6.2. Raster-based techniques

Raster-based techniques that adapt geometric complexity at each frame to meet performance constraints are the most classic approach for time-critical rendering [257]. Early approaches (e.g., [70, 149]), already used heuristic functions based on eccentricity with respect to a static gaze point (typically the screen center) to determine the level of detail. Use of the CSF for view-dependent polygonal simplification is also well established (e.g., [136, 184]). The acuity fall-off models used in these early works were later extended to dynamic gaze situations, in conjunction with eye trackers.

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In an early geometric simplification model developed by 84 Ohshima et al. [167], six different levels from the set of 85 hierarchical geometric models are selected to be rendered 86 according to the Euclidean distance from the ROI. In ad-87 dition, this model exploits HVS subdividing the visual re-88 gions into central, peripheral, kinetic, and fusion zones. 89 It is interesting to note that, since discrete LOD switch 90 causes notable artifacts, the updating is postponed dur-91 ing saccade movements. While the method is designed for 92 eve-tracking, the presented results were only for a head-93 tracking situation. Later approaches switched to continu-94 ous LODs to provide a much finer adaptation granularity 95 and reduce LOD switching artifacts. Luebke et al. [137], in 96 particular, used a multi-resolution mesh model supporting 97 view-dependent-simplification to propose gaze-directed ge-98 ometric simplification technique based on contrast match-99 ing function and Kelly's temporal contrast sensitivity func-100 tion [108]. Results demonstrate good quality images with 101 only one-third of the total number of polygons for bench-102 mark scenes. However, in their implementation, temporal 103 contrast sensitivity is not considered. Murphy et al. [162] 104 also used a multi-resolution mesh representation to ren-105 der objects in a gaze-contingent manner. This is achieved 106 by recursively subdividing triangles that are larger than 107 the local resolution provided by an acuity-based function 108 depending on eccentricity with respect to the gaze point. 109 This is the first study to use binocular eye tracking inside 110

Algorithm used Beforences		Static Dyna		amic Pipelin		eline
Algorithin used	References		Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			tracker	tracker	based	based
Mesh simplification	Ohshima et al. [167]	0	0	Head	0	•
Textured mesh simplification	Luebke et al. $[137]$	0	•	0	0	•
Polygon simplification	Luebke and Hallen [136]	•	0	0	0	•
Texture simplification with	Funkhouser and Sequin [70]	•	0	0	0	•
3D mipmap						
Level of detail (LOD)	Reddy [149, 184]	•	0	0	0	•
LOD	Murphy and Duchowski [162],	0	•	0	0	•
	Parkhurst and Niebur [170]					
LOD	Scheel et al. [195]	0	0	Optic	0	•
LOD	Bektas et al. [27]	0	•	Mouse	0	•
LOD (holo)	Ju and Park [103]	0	0	Mouse	0	•
Adaptive tessellation	Papadopoulos and Kaufmann [168]	0	0	Head	0	•
Adaptive tessellation	Lindeberg [131], Zheng et al. [262]	0	•	0	0	•
Adaptive tessellation	Tiwary et al. [219]	0	0	Mouse	0	•
Curvature 3D simplification	Cheng [44]	0	•	0	0	•
Sparse voxel octree	Weier et al. [241, 240]	0	0	Optic	•	0
CSF-based ray mask	Murphy et al. [163]	0	•	Head	•	0

Table 4. List of different geometric simplification techniques; similar techniques have been clustered together.

Head = head-tracker Optic = Optical-tracker

a head-mounted display. These general LOD-based approaches were later applied, with minimal variation, for a variety of different applications, including rendering models coming from 3D scanning [44] or large terrains [195]. In a visual search study using an eye tracker on a desktop display, Parkhurst and Niebur [170] rendered objects at the point of gaze in more detail than objects in the periphery. They found that, while search times increase with decreasing LODs beyond a critical threshold, the resulting increase in frame rate facilitates virtual interac-10 tion. Later studies found that contrast is a better pre-11 dictor of the overall search performance and perceptibility 12 than feature size, and, thus, variable resolution rendering 13 is mostly beneficial if detail is added to low contrast re-14 gions first [234]. LOD rendering is also used in conjunction 15 with non-conventional displays. For instance, Ju and Park 16 [103] exploited levels of detail to speed-up the generation 17 of computer-generated holograms for AR applications on a 18 near-eye holographic display. The algorithm computes the 19 angular spectrum of individual meshes, aggregates them 20 in a hologram plane, and then Fourier transforms them to 21 produce the complex wave field of the entire scene. LODs 22 are used to adapt the density of meshes so that they are 23 higher at the fovea. Adapting the mesh density through 24 mesh adaptation improves over the prior point-based ap-25 proach [238, 85, 84, 100] that simply adapts point density, 26 leaving vacant areas between points. 27

One of the main limitations of early LOD techniques was the low granularity of LOD approaches and the limited performance of continuous LOD solutions, which made them difficult to apply in the very time-constrained setting of foveated rendering. Several of the later methods started to take into account the evolution of GPUs by amortizing LOD computation efforts on groups of primitives (e.g., surface patches), rather than computing the required levelof-detail at the single triangle or point level [47, 75, 76]. With this approach, CPU utilization was minimized, and applications could very quickly adapt the resolution even when dealing with massive scenes. This solution was adapted, e.g., for view-dependent rendering on a light-field display [31].

As an alternative to batching, several solutions have 42 recently exploited GPU tessellation to achieve the fast 43 adaptation time required by foveation applications. Linde-44 berg [131], for instance, introduced a depth of field tessel-45 lation, in which in conjunction with the reduction of tes-46 sellation levels our of the focus plane, there is an increase 47 of blurring with eccentricity. Importantly, the user study 48 shows that *pop-up artifacts* significantly decrease with the 49 increase in blur level, suggesting that the technique can be 50 used to hide the *pop-up effect*. An alternative solution, pro-51 posed by Tiwary et al. [219], instead, is to perform calcula-52 tions of tessellation levels only during saccadic motions and 53 to adapt the mesh only at fixations. Swafford et al. [210] 54 propose a method in which imperceptible triangles are 55 culled and then a tessellation shader parameterized with 56 the acuity fall-off model is applied. A similar approach 57 was also proposed by Zheng et al. [262]. Under multi-58 tiled LCDs, Papadopoulos and Kaufmann [168] present 59 acuity-driven 2D gigapixel imagery visualization using a 60 GPU-tessellation scheme for high-quality focus plus con-61 text lens and virtual texture rendering. The tessellation 62 level of the context area of the image and of the lens is cal-63 culated differently, taking into account both the position of 64 the viewer with respect to the screen and the deformation 65 applied by the lens. The results indicate that using the 66 high-quality focus plus context lens significantly reduces
visual artifacts while accurately capturing the underlying
lens function. Moreover, their parallel system saves up to
70% of the bandwidth and achieves frame rates of 7.5 fps,
compared to less than 2 fps for naive pre-tessellation that
does not take into account the user's gaze.

7 6.3. Discussion

All systems dealing with complex scenes to be rendered 8 within stringent real-time constraints must integrate techniques for filtering out as efficiently as possible the data 10 that is not contributing to a particular image. The goal is 11 to have rendering complexity proportional to the bounded 12 perceivable image size rather than to the potentially un-13 bounded scene size. View-dependent geometric simplifica-14 tion has been one of the major building blocks of real-time 15 systems in this particular context [257]. In the context of 16 foveation, the general solutions are adapted to the partic-17 ular conditions in which these techniques must operate. 18

First of all, several approaches include the definition of 19 adaptive metrics that drive simplification refinement based 20 on perceptual measures specific to foveation. Currently, no 21 single approach has emerged as a de-facto standard, and 22 techniques range from using just pre-determined simplifi-23 cation levels at the center or the periphery (e.g., [241]) to 24 locally adapting sampling rates based on perceptual func-25 tions e.g., [137, 163, 168]). Many of the methods adapt 26 these functions to display-specific situations. 27

Second, while typical adaptive rendering solutions 28 slowly and smoothly vary tessellation as a function, e.g., 29 of distance to the viewer, foreated solutions tend to be 30 effective when simplification is applied in a much more 31 aggressive way, with a sharp decrease in details outside 32 of the focus area. The low level of detail in the periph-33 ery, however, is prone to introduce visible flickering ar-34 tifacts. For these reasons, geometric simplification tech-35 niques are seldom used alone, but are often combined with 36 a screen-space technique that blurs the low-detail areas 37 (e.g., [241, 240, 131]). 38

Finally, knowledge of gaze provided by high-frequency and high-precision trackers can be exploited to schedule computations and adaptation during the saccade and/or fixation periods, with the purpose of reducing costs and improving visual fidelity (e.g., [167, 219]).

Figure 44 Figure 7. Shading simplification and chromatic degradation

While the previously discussed classes achieve optimiza-46 tion by reducing the number of rendered pixels or geomet-47 ric primitives, the *third group* of techniques in our clas-48 sification (Figure 5) achieves optimization by adaptively 49 reducing the work or data required per pixel. We dedi-50 cate shader simplification (Sec. 7.1), and chromatic degra-51 dation (Sec. 7.2) under one single category, because the 52 works pursued in these categories have the *common goal* 53

of condensing the computation load of computing a photorealistic representation. However, while shader simplification reduces the computational load of color computation, chromatic degradation takes into account variable color sensitivity, e.g., to reduce bandwidth or complexity of tone mapping.

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In the following subsections, we first present an analysis of recent literature on different shading simplification models (Sec. 7.1), and then investigate different techniques developed for chromatic degradation (Sec. 7.2).

7.1. Shading simplification

In advanced photorealistic rendering, as well as in illustrative rendering, computing the final color of each pixel may consume a significant proportion of computing resources, even for geometrically simple scenes. In recent years, several real-time graphics solutions have been employed for reducing rendering loads through the reduction of shader costs. A notable example is *Variable Rate Shading (VRS)*, introduced in *DirectX 12* graphics pipeline [205]. In foveated rendering, shader simplification optimizes the rendering time by using higher accuracy, but slower, methods in the focus area and simplified, but faster, ones in the periphery. The techniques include coarse shaders, multi-rate shaders, lighting, and occlusion simplification. In this section, we provide an analysis of the literature in this area.

7.1.1. Methods

In the context of shading simplification, there is not a sharp difference between ray-based and raster-based techniques, since most works use hybrid approaches. The most common configuration consists in ray-based shaders executing within a raster-based pipeline.

The fact that shaders can be used to naturally simulate general gaze-contingent stimuli was recognized early on. In particular, Duchowski and Coltekin [60] developed the first gaze-dependent fragment shader in which visual stimuli, such as color and luminance values were discarded in the periphery. This approach was designed, however, for foveation simulation, and not for optimization, and was used in a variety of applications. For instance, in their space-variant visualization framework, Bektas et al. [27] implement the degraded quality using pixel shader (GLSL language). This gaze-contingent display also can manage the level of detail (LOD) using a weighted Euclidean distance between any pixel and the gaze point in 2D space.

Later, shader techniques were also employed to reduce 99 workload in addition to simulating foreation effects. Since 100 shader simplification works well when the high-quality 101 shader must do complex computations, the technique is of-102 ten applied when using global illumination models, which 103 must perform integration to aggregate realistic lighting in-104 formation. Moreover, due to the inherent real-time adap-105 tation features, these methods adapt well to dynamic gaze-106 tracking. 107

Algorithm used	Poferences	Static	tatic Dynar		amic Pipeline	
Algorithm used	References		Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			$\operatorname{tracker}$	tracker	based	based
Gaze-contingent occlusion	Mantiuk and Janus [144]	0	•	0	0	•
Screen space ambient occlu-	Mantiuk [143]	0	•	0	0	•
sion						
Coarse pixel shader	Vaidyanathan et al. [225], He et al.	0	0	Virt.	0	•
	[82], Xiao et al. [248]					
Coarse pixel shader	Patney et al. [173, 172]	0	•	0	0	•
Multi-rate shader	Stengel et al. [203]	0	•	0	0	•
Pixel shader degradation	Duchowski et al. [60]	0	•	Mouse	0	•
Gaze-contingent pixel shader	Bektas et al. [27]	0	•	0	0	•

Table 5. List of different shading simplification techniques; similar techniques have been clustered together.

 $Virt. = virtual \ camera$

For instance, global illumination with the *ambient oc*clusion shader model improves photorealism through shadowing the ambient light of nearby objects. Mantiuk and Janus [144] propose a gaze-dependent hybrid model in which the ROIs are rendered with ambient occlusion, with number of ambient occlusion sampling rays decreasa ing with eccentricity, and areas outside the ROI with local Phong shading. On the presented benchmarks, the method achieved a performance boost up to 276% in the best-case scenario, and on average 140.07% without nega-10 tively affecting user performance. The approach was later 11 extended by the same authors to gaze-dependent screen-12 space ambient occlusion (SSAO) [143]. In the implementa-13 tion, ROIs have 32 samples per pixel, while the sampling 14 rate is gradually decreased with higher eccentricity accord-15 ing to the CSF. 16

Adjusting the number of samples has then been gener-17 alized to control variable shading rates (VRS) in a GPU 18 pipeline. In their seminal study, Vaidyanathan et al. [225] 19 introduced the first coarse pixel shader (CPS), derived 20 from multi-sample anti-aliasing (MSAA) [5]. Generally, 21 MSAA uses a fixed number of visible samples; however, the 22 CPS allows predefined varied shading samples across the 23 image. As a result, the number of shading computations 24 on the shaded quads saved is about 50% than Guenter et 25 al. [80]. Similarly, Patney et al. [173] apply variable-rate 26 shading at different resolutions which enable coarse render-27 ing after 30° eccentricity. In addition to shading reduction, 28 one shader for each 4×4 pixel-block, blur mask, contrast 29 enhancement, and temporal anti-aliasing (TAA) is used to 30 discard peripheral visual artifacts. As an improvement, 31 this approach decreases the shading rate by up to 70% in 32 comparison to Guenter et al. [80]. Furthermore, Patney et 33 al. [172] demonstrate a set of perceptual-based methods to 34 enhance immersion experience and alleviate the computa-35 tional burden of VR using $8 \times$ MSAA to ensure temporal 36 stability in foveated rendering. He et al. [82] demonstrated 37 that simple pipeline mechanisms present in programmable 38 GPU hardware used in conjunction with adaptive shad-39 ing techniques that select whether to use 2×2 coarse or 40 fine fragments for shading can reduce the cost of shading 41

during rendering by at least a factor of two in most bench-42 marks. More complex pipeline scheduling enables using 43 even coarser fragments (up to 4×4 groups of pixels, re-44 ducing shading costs, on average, to more than three and 45 sometimes up to a factor of five. Nowadays, VRS [205] is 46 now a hardware-implemented solution available in graph-47 ics pipelines. For instance, the Turing architecture from 48 NVIDIA combines VRS [205] with adaptive resolutions 49 [29] to speed-up rendering. This approach can be exploited 50 in foveated rendering by decreasing the shading rate in the 51 periphery through perceptually guided measures [82]. 52

The above decoupled sampling techniques, such as 53 coarse pixel shading, is that they reduce costs by lowering 54 the shading rate while resolving visibility at the full res-55 olution, thereby preserving details along geometric edges. 56 This is a major advantage with respect to several of the 57 sparse visibility sampling methods of Sec. 5 or the geo-58 metric simplification techniques of Sec. 6. However, loss of 59 texture details can produce visible blocking artifacts and 60 temporal jittering in the periphery. For this reason, Xiao 61 et al. [248] propose to combine coarse shading temporal 62 supersampling, i.e., jittering frames and combining sam-63 ples from multiple frames together. While not originally 64 applied to foveation, this method is at the basis of sev-65 eral spatio-temporal techniques (Sec. 8). Stengel et al. 66 [203] generalized the concept of multirate shading by in-67 corporating shading rate adaptation in a flexible GPU de-68 *ferred rasterization*. In their approach, several properties 69 of the sampling scene are accumulated in buffers during 70 the geometry pass. These include, in addition to the usual 71 depth, normal, and material information, also velocity and 72 semantic information. A perceptual pass combines an acu-73 ity falloff function with several other hints, such as eve 74 motion, texture adaptation, silhouette, eve adaptation to 75 luminance, to produce a sampling probability map, from 76 which a sparse sampling pattern is generated. The pat-77 tern is stored in the depth buffer, and early-depth is used 78 to stop processing unselected fragments. The final images 79 are produced by applying an inpainting process. This ap-80 proach is very general and has been shown to decrease the 81 number of shaded fragments by 50%-80% in comparison 82

 $_{1}$ to the prior works (e.g., [225, 82, 80]).

² 7.1.2. Discussion

Shader simplification is an extremely effective technique 3 to reduce the overall cost of rendering on high-resolution 4 displays since the pixel shader is often the dominant factor. 5 Modern shader simplification performs coarse rendering in 6 the periphery with either stochastic sampling and inpainting [203], or reduced shading rate [82] followed by advanced 8 filtering [173, 172]. The implementation of gaze-dependent 9 shader optimization has been simplified with the intro-10 duction of CPS and VRS as common features in modern 11 GPUs, such as NVIDIA Turing and Intel Gen 11 architec-12 tures. Specialized solutions need; however, to be devised 13 to aggressively apply CPS in a foveation setting. First, 14 15 since CPS is unmatched with the visible samples, jittering and flickering are frequently generated in the overly sim-16 17 plified area at the periphery of foveated renderings. These dynamic artifacts are known to be visible and require the 18 application of strong temporal-anti-aliasing methods. Sec-19 ond, the rendered scene has lower shading quality in the 20 disoccluded regions, especially as it is more visible during 21 fast motion or dynamic shading. 22

23 7.2. Chromatic degradation

Achromatic (luminance) spatial acuity in the HVS is 24 known to be better than chromatic spatial acuity [161]. 25 Video and image codecs have exploited this fact by sepa-26 rating signals into luma and chroma components and re-27 ducing the amount of color information in a signal in fa-28 vor of luminance data [246]. Color sensitivity also rapidly 29 decreases in the peripheral region like any other type of 30 visual stimuli. It is thus possible to perform chromatic 31 degradation in the non-focal areas without negatively af-32 fecting the perceptual quality of the images. This process 33 can be exploited to, e.g., to perform gaze-dependent tone 34 mapping or reduce the required bandwidth for the storage 35 and transmission of images, especially high dynamic range 36 37 ones.

This section comprises different techniques developed for chromatic degradation in the periphery. Table 6 lists several techniques used for chromatic degradation.

41 7.2.1. Methods

As for shading simplification, there is not a sharp difference between ray-based and raster-based techniques, since
chromatic degradation happens at the level of color computation.

Several works in these areas are centered around user 46 studies to find the tolerable color degradation in the pe-47 riphery. Among other techniques, Zhang et al. [259] 48 develop a peripheral color tolerance model based on the 49 CIE2000 color difference formula. In this technique, the 50 individual chromatic discrimination models at parafovea 51 and periphery are stored in a look-up table for future use. 52 Duchowski et al. [59] develop color degradation maps by 53

assigning each pixel's gray value to its corresponding contour value. Apart from the original resolution degradation model, Watson et al. [235] also use chromaticity degradation by applying grayscale in the periphery. Bektas et al. [27] apply modified color degradation mask developed by Duchowski et al. [59], and integrate it in a general gaze-dependent framework for testing user performance on visual analysis tasks.

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In one of the earlier studies on chromatic degradation, Sakurai et al. [194] investigate color zone map, in which each zone has three primary colors, and unique hue components that correspond to temporal, upper nasal, and lower directions in the visual field. One most striking finding is that, with eccentricity, the hue changes and saturation of unique hue components decreases. Likewise, the hue resolution also can be defined by the total number of gray levels within each RGB channel. Correspondingly, Liu and Hua [132] design spatial CSF-based chromatic foveation mask, and hue resolution foveation metric. Interestingly, this method has been shown to save bandwidth over 65% in image transmission.

When dealing with colors, it is important to note that tone mapping has to be used used for reproducing high dynamic range (HDR) colors coming out of the rendering pipeline to the color gamut of the display. Knowledge of gaze information has been shown to be important to improve this process. As noted in Sec. 3.8, the HVS is always slowly adapting to a target luminance measured in a cone of approximately 1 degree around the gaze direction. The gaze is; however, not static, but follows saccadic motions. Mikami et al. [157] introduced a gaze-dependent approach based on a parameterization of Reinhard's photographic operator. They measure the local adaptation luminance by examining ROIs of $2^{\circ}, 4^{\circ}$, and 10° around the viewing angles, and take as the final adaptation luminance the logarithmic average from the original compression equation. Experimental results demonstrated, however, that the results are very scene-dependent [252].

Mantiuk and Markowski [146] generalized this concept 92 by proposing a gaze-dependent global tone mapping for 93 HDR images. In their approach, for every pixel in the in-94 put HDR image, which may be the output of a complex 95 rendering process, a map of the background adaptation 96 luminance is computed. This is done in a GPU shader 97 that analyzes a one-degree area around each pixel and de-98 fines the local adaptation luminance to the most frequent 99 quantized luminance value in that area. This work is done 100 only when the rendered image changes. At each frame, the 101 gaze direction is captured, filtered, and used to compute 102 the temporary adaptation luminance, which combines the 103 fetched background adaptation luminance with the previ-104 ous temporary adaptation luminance using an exponen-105 tial function. The model describes adaptation to light, 106 e.g., when the observer moves his gaze from dark areas 107 to bright areas of the display. This adaptation luminance 108 is then used to compute the tone compression curve and 109 compress the HDR image. The work was later extended to 110

Algorithm used	D oforoncos	Static	Dynamic		Pipeline	
Algorithm used	References		Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			$\operatorname{tracker}$	tracker	based	based
Adaptive tone mapping	Mikami et al. [157], Yamauchi et	0	•	0	0	•
	al. [252], Mauderer et al. [152], Man-					
	tiuk [146, 142]					
Color zone mapping	Duchowski et al. [59]	0	•	0	0	•
Color zone mapping	Sakurai et al. [194]	•	0	0	0	•
Color tolerance model	Zhang et al. [259]	0	•	0	0	•
Gray scale increment	Watson et al. [235]	0	0	Mouse	0	•
Degradation color mask	Bektas et al. [27]	0	•	Mouse	0	•
Spatial chromatic mask	Liu and Hua [132]	•	0	0	0	•

Table 6. List of different chromatic degradation techniques; similar techniques have been clustered together.

videos [142]. In this latter work, to avoid the artifacts, ocular Modulation Transfer Function [52] in linear luminance,
and two Gaussian pooling filters in the nonlinear domain
have been applied. Similarly, in a user study, Mauderer
et al. [152] gradually degrade color using tone mapping
to see the color discrimination effect in the periphery. Although this method improves color discrimination, the low
eye-tracking frequency may generate flickering effects.

7.2.2. Discussion

While early methods, and many current works, study 10 color degradation in the context of psychophysical testing, 11 more recent work has started to exploit it for optimiza-12 13 tion purposes. The first area of interest is bandwidth reduction (e.g., [132]), which takes into account that lossy 14 compression models can use gaze-dependent color sensi-15 tivity information to optimally allocate bitrates across a 16 viewed image. The second area of interest emerging is tone 17 mapping which, in the most general case, must definitely 18 be gaze-dependent. While research has mostly targeted 19 the gaze-dependent presentation of HDR content (e.g., 20 [146, 142, 152]), such information can also be exploited to 21 avoid intensive computation by combining it with shader 22 simplification (see Sec. 7.1). 23

24 8. Spatio-temporal deterioration

The final and *fourth group* of techniques in our classification (Figure 5) strives to improve performance by adapting the refresh rate of pixels across the image, eventually reusing information from previous frames for the less important pixels.

Spatio-temporal deterioration is a feature found in many real-time, multi-rate, and multipass rendering algorithms, as it strives to amortize rendering costs over multiple frames. In foveated rendering, these techniques need to be suitably updated, as they need to take into account the temporal sensitivity in the foveal region, in the periphery, or both.

8.1. Methods

Temporal coherence strives to reuse the intermediate or final information computed during the course of one frame to speed-up the rendering of the following frames. As such, it complements the previously seen approaches, that focus on improving the performance of individual rendering tasks, eventually by lowering the accuracy at which one frame is computed. This general approach dates from the early days of graphics [208], and has led to a wide variety of approaches [196].

Foveated rendering has also used spatio-temporal dete-47 rioration approaches since its early days as a component 18 of many frameworks. Dorr et al. [56] were among the first 49 to present a gaze-contingent system capable of modulat-50 ing the spatio-temporal contents of a high-resolution real-51 time video, but adapting the spatial multiresolution pyra-52 mid of previous approaches [72, 174] to a temporal pyra-53 mid. Moreover, several early peripheral pixel reduction 54 methods (e.g., [80, 63]) applied a combination of motion-55 compensated temporal reprojection [79] and temporal jit-56 ter on a spatial sampling grid [49] to decrease frame times 57 by recomputing a smaller number of pixel per frame in 58 the periphery (Sec. 5.4). Since then, a wide variety of 59 foveated spatio-temporal solutions were integrated in both 60 ray-casting and rasterization pipelines. 61

Several approaches adapt classic optimizations, such 62 as amortized supersampling [254, 248] an reprojection 63 caches [165]. Weier et al. [243] presented a foveated realtime ray tracer combined foreated rendering based on dy-65 namic eye tracking with reprojection rendering using pre-66 vious frames to drastically reduce the number of new im-67 age samples per frame. A smooth image is then gener-68 ated by combining these sparse samples with data coming 69 from previous frames. First, a coarse depth mesh is recon-70 structed from the previous frame samples, and a coarse im-71 age is rendered from the current frame perspective. Then 72 the parts of the image that are considered not valid due 73 to occlusions/disocclusions/missing data or poor reprojec-74 tions are identified. This is done by detecting if there is 75 a depth or luminance difference between a current frame's 76 pixel and its direct neighborhood in the reprojected image 77 that is larger than a user-defined threshold or if the pixel 78

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Algorithm used	Deferences	Static	Dynamic		Pipeline	
Algorithm used	References	Eye-	Eye-	Gaze-	Ray-	Raster-
			$\operatorname{tracker}$	tracker	based	based
Temporal raytracing	Weier et al. [243]	0	•	0	•	0
Temporal pyramid	Dorr et al. [56]	0	•	0	0	•
Time-warped rendering	Linus et al. [65]	0	•	0	0	•
Spatio-temporal filtering	Jiang et al. [97]	0	•	0	0	•
Temporal supersampling	Xiao et al. $[248]$	0	•	0	0	•

Table 7. List of different spatio-temporal techniques; similar techniques have been clustered together.

is on a silhouette edge. Finally, the high-resolution image
is generated, reusing reprojected pixels from the previous
frame whenever possible, and recomputing invalid pixels
by ray-tracing. Reflections and refractions are reasonably
well handled if present in small areas of the image, since
those pixels are likely to be recomputed. Moving lights,
however, tend to drastically degrade performance.

Franke et al. [65] used similar approaches in a raster-8 ization pipeline. Since in rasterization redrawing single 9 pixels cannot be done efficiently, their focus is to devise ap-10 proaches to reduce expensive redrawing operations with-11 out visible impact on image quality. In their approach, 12 the last frame's color and world position images are re-13 projected into the current frame and hole-filled using a 14 push-pull filter [203]. A confidence map is then derived 15 by combining an *eccentricity confidence factor*, based on 16 the falloff in the eye's visual acuity with two factors that 17 measure the confidence in hole-filling result. The first fac-18 tor is inversely proportional to contrast, while the second 19 is inversely proportional to the hole size. Moving objects 20 are handled by lowering confidence of pixels where object 21 motion is detected. All pixels whose confidence is below a 22 given threshold are then redrawn. This is done by redraw-23 ing the scene, culling out objects that are totally covered 24 by high-confidence pixels. Before displaying the final im-25 age, a TAA and motion smoothing pass is applied. The 26 method proves very efficient, but is less capable to handle 27 transparency and reflection than the fine-grained raytrac-28 ing approach [243], while still being incapable to efficiently 29 support moving lights. 30

31 8.2. Discussion

One of the main problems in adopting temporal degra-32 dation methods is that, unlike the spatial resolution as a 33 function of eccentricity, the peripheral temporal charac-34 teristics of the HVS are still not totally understood [56]. 35 This makes it difficult to have reliable models that pre-36 dict the effect of spatio-temporal degradation. Recently, 37 Krajanciche et al. [120] proposed the first experimentally 38 derived comprehensive model for spatio-temporal aspects 39 over the retina under conditions close to VR applications. 40 41 It is interesting to note that temporal sensitivity has been observed to peak in the periphery, somewhere between 42 $20^{\circ} - 50^{\circ}$ eccentricity [224, 120]. This means that foreated 43 rendering solutions cannot limit themselves to just focus 44

on providing high-quality rendering for the fovea, spend-45 ing as little resources as possible in the periphery, but 46 should also combat peripheral flickering. While those ef-47 fects can be significantly amortized by spatiotemporal fil-48 tering [80, 63, 248, 97], these solutions are only partial, 49 as they tend to overly reduce local contrast. Loss of con-50 trast in a large area of the periphery region can result in 51 tunnel vision artifacts [39]. For this reason, other authors 52 have tried, with variable success, to produce flicker-control 53 schemes that strive to preserve contrast [173, 97]. An im-54 portant consideration to make is that the sensitivity to 55 temporal artifacts also depends on fixation types. Weier 56 et al. [243], for instance, noted that fewer visual artifacts 57 were noticed when users concentrated their attention on 58 a moving target, a fact that could be exploited in future 59 work. Further considerations are presented in Sec. 10.1. 60

9. Applications

Foveated rendering may be viewed as a general optimization technique, which could be applied to any use case in which interactive images are presented to viewers. Nonetheless, in the past years, foveation has been applied more extensively in a few selected areas that we have broadly classified into visualization (Sec. 9.1), compression (Sec. 9.2), and transmission (Sec. 9.3). Compression and transmission are included here as they offer enabling technology for remote rendering and collaboration, and, for maximum efficiency, end-to-end systems require a careful integration of all components. Table 8 distributes the surveyed literature among these selected areas.

9.1. Foveated visualization

In this application class, we broadly classify all situations in which the main application of foveation is to visualize data, either to improve application performance or to display some effects to emulate particular viewing conditions.

9.1.1. Immersive visualization

According to Cuervo et al. [51], three parameters are essential for a truly immersive virtual experience: *quality, responsiveness*, and *mobility*. The *quality* guarantees natural and real-world visual experience, *responsiveness* represents rapid visual feedback to motion, and *mobility* allows moving untethered in physical space. Park et al. 86

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Foveated visualization	Application in visualization (Sec. 9.1)	Foveated compression (Sec. 9.2)	Foveated transmission (Sec. 9.3)
Adaptive resolution (Sec. 5)	$ \begin{bmatrix} 127, \ 235, \ 174, \ 24, \ 23, \ 227, \ 77, \ 176, \ 3, \ 34, \ 78, \\ 199, \ 260, \ 80, \ 63, \ 69, \ 201, \ 177, \ 27, \ 28, \ 209, \ 179, \\ 180, \ 243, \ 85, \ 139, \ 123, \ 115, \ 116, \ 242, \ 156, \ 213, \\ 100, \ 84, \ 226, \ 148, \ 214, \ 103, \ 169, \ 238, \ 68, \ 154, \\ 36, \ 223, \ 110, \ 200, \ 117, \ 155, \ 247, \ 10, \ 256, \ 140, \\ 253, \ 18, \ 175 \end{bmatrix} $	$\begin{bmatrix} 72, \ 42, \ 198, \\ 90, \ 106, \ 255 \end{bmatrix}$	$\begin{bmatrix} 72, \ 258, \ 2, \ 158, \ 113, \\ 138, \ 51, \ 92, \ 93, \ 189, \\ 109, \ 156, \ 154, \ 169, \ 67, \\ 211, \ 155, \ 94, \ 128 \end{bmatrix}$
Geometric simplification (Sec. 6)	[70, 167, 149, 137, 137, 136, 162, 184, 44, 170, 236, 163, 168, 241, 240, 195, 131, 262, 219]		[168, 195]
Shading simplification and chromatic degradation (Sec. 7)	[164, 60, 144, 225, 82, 27, 192, 173, 172, 143, 248] [235, 194, 59, 145, 69, 27, 259, 152, 142]	[132]	[203]
Spatio-temporal deterioration (Sec. 8)	[80, 63, 56, 243, 248, 97, 65]		

Table 8. Different application domains of foveated rendering, most of the research engage in rendering and visualization. Compression and transmission are included as they offer enabling technology for remote rendering and collaboration, and, for maximum efficiency, end-to-end systems require a careful integration of all components.

[169] also suggest that a display requires high resolution without screen door effects, wide FOV, high frame rate without motion artifact, and minimum tolerable latency for an immersive experience. Similarly, Fujita and Harada [69] report fast, low-latency, smooth, and realistic rendering methods are crucial for immersion. Weier et al. [243] support this statement by exploring the necessity of high frame rate, and low latency.

The higher demand on pixel density along with the stereo display increases the complexity of the real-time 10 rendering process, making foveated rendering very appeal-11 ing. With the emergence of robust eye-trackers that al-12 low individual vision, immersive VR has now been consid-13 ered the main application domain of foveated rendering. 14 Seminal foveated rendering research for immersive expe-15 rience are based on adaptive sampling [80, 243, 69, 156], 16 coarse pixel shading [225, 82, 173, 172], rolling rasteriza-17 tion [68], and contrast aware foreation [223]. Due to pe-18 ripheral degradation, immersion is not free from flickering, 19 and a strong anti-aliasing algorithm is required. There is 20 another downside of conventional VR displays. Because of 21 the flat surface, the vergence and accommodation conflict 22 stops the foveated window from acquiring accurate depth 23 information. However, the modern near-eye displays, e.g., 24 holographic, varifocal, and light field can overcome this 25 drawback, which will increase the level of immersion, but 26 with higher computation. In a recent review on near-eve 27 holographic display, Chang et al. [45] concisely explore the 28 potentiality of foveated rendering in holographic displays. 29 According to the authors, foveated rendering is possible 30 either with multiple display panels or on rendering tech-31 nique. The potential rendering approaches can be point 32 cloud [84, 100], polygon mesh [103] and multi-plane mod-33 els [139, 41, 123]. Besides, Chang et al. [41] recommend 34 that the first two approaches rely on complicated geometry 35

and computer graphics processing. Nonetheless, the multiplane model is much simpler and more efficient, in which 37 the 3D scene is rendered as multiple planar 2D images.

9.1.2. Volumetric visualization

Volumetric data visualization has become more common nowadays due to the advances in 3D data acquisition and complex simulations on modern displays with an interactive framerate. Due to the enormous complexity of semitransparent volume rendering, which requires the computation of integrals per pixel, maintaining interactive performance is very hard, and much research has focused on volume-specific optimization techniques [19, 32]. In this context, foreation promises to be extremely effective, as it can drastically reduce both the number of pixels for which to compute these integrals and the quality at which they need to be computed. For this reason, many applications have been studied. Among the various outstanding foveated volumetric rendering methods it is important to mention applications to importance-driven medical data visualization [227], arbitrary geometric object visualization [163], large scale geometric dataset interaction [136], general volume data visualization [36], depth peeling-based data visualization [260], and large scale scientific data visualization [10]. Foveated volumetric approaches have also been introduced over 15 years ago in the context of remote visualization (e.g., [258, 176]).

9.1.3. Large-scale visualization

Many important application domains, including 3D scanning, computer-aided design, and numerical simulation, require the interactive inspection of extremely massive models. Despite the continuing and rapid improvement in GPU hardware performance, the interactive rendering of these models using brute force techniques con-

tinues largely overloading state-of-the-art hardware plat-1 forms. For this reason, researchers have devised a variety 2 of adaptive techniques for rendering approximate represen-3 tations, filtering out as efficiently as possible the data that 4 is not contributing to a particular image [257]. Foreation 5 promises to be extremely effective in this context. For 6 this reason, for a variety on for a variety 7 of massive-model rendering use cases in a variety of con-8 figurations. These include foreated terrain rendering on 9 very large high-resolution displays [184, 195], visualization 10 of voxel data on tiled displays [241, 240, 192], focus-and-11 context visualization and large image data visualization 12 on multi-projector systems [3, 27, 26], projection display 13 of cultural heritage artifacts [77, 78], as well as information 14 visualization on large high-resolution displays [13] visual-15 16 ize large scale information.

9.1.4. Vision defection mapping 17

Nowadays, a large population suffers from vision de-18 fects like myopia, hyperopia, glaucoma, presbyopia, and 19 astigmatism. Therefore, considering the space-variant vi-20 sion characteristics, an accurate simulation of an individ-21 ual's visual field can educate students, patients, and family 22 members about the perceptual defects. Foreated render-23 ing methods are the basic enabling technology for this ap-24 plication use-case. Perry and Geisler [174, 73] design a 25 multi-resolution pyramid based vision simulation frame-26 work that can visualize the resolution map of a *glaucoma* 27 patient. In the same way, Labhishetty et al. [121] inves-28 tigate accommodation conflict on *myopia* patients. Inter-29 estingly, this study suggests that, unlike forea and peri-30 forea, the *paraforea to higher eccentricity* is affected by 31 myopia. Since rendering the resolution of non-foveal simu-32 33 lations can affect user accommodation, the authors suggest considering foveated rendering algorithms for such medi-34 cal conditions. Fridman et al. [66] simulate observer vi-35 sion with gaze point. Likewise, Deza et al. [55] visualize 36 real-time metameric image using foveation. Correspond-37 ingly, Barsky [21] demonstrate computer-generated images 38 that incorporate the characteristics of an individual's en-39 tire optical system based on the optical wavefront aber-40 rometry measured using a Shack-Hartmann aberrometer. 41 In fact, this study can also be used for efficient interface 42 design, usability, safety, and behavioral evaluation. Re-43 cently, Wu and Kim [247] develop an AR display in which 44 a free-form image combiner allows embedding prescribed 45 lens to provide vision-corrected augmented object with an 46 optical see-through display. 47

9.1.5. Preview systems 48

Several algorithms are too slow to fully produce full-49 quality, large FOV images at an interactive rate. Pro-50 gressive rendering has been employed for decades in this 51 situation to quickly provide coarse approximations to the 52 viewer in a very short time [74]. Foreated rendering can 53 be very beneficial in this area, by concentrating image im-54 provements on areas that are currently viewed by the user. Koskela et al. [115] use the first approach developing a 56 gaze-directed guided preview with the quadratic denomi-57 nator visual acuity model. In this algorithm, more rays are 58 generated around the ROIs using unidirectional path trac-59 ing. Unsurprisingly, this foveated preview system performs 60 ten times faster than the conventional uniform sampling 61 over the whole 360° image area, with little degradation 62 with respect to uniform refinement [116]. 63

9.2. Foveated compression

In several situations, rendering applications must work 65 in a distributed setting. In that case, reducing the band-66 width of transmitted rendering images is particularly im-67 portant. Foveation has been demonstrated to improve 68 compression by considering gaze in bit allocation methods. 69 Back in 1998, Geisler et al. [72] were among the first to ad-70 vocate for the lossy video compression. Among the 71 few representatives of foveated compression techniques, 72 Sheikh et al. [198] developed gaze-contingent low-pass fil-73 tering on standard video compression algorithms (H.263 74 and MPEG4). Likewise, Wilson and Jeffrey [72] designed 75 a multi-resolution *image compression* for low-bandwidth 76 communication. It has, however, been noted that consid-77 erable savings are obtained only by aggressively reducing 78 the quality outside the ROI, which can cause noticeable 79 artifacts in the periphery. More conservative applications 80 resolve these problems but provide only modest savings 81 with respect to non-foreated compression [172]. Nonethe-82 less, Frieß et al. [67] have successfully used this paradigm 83 by proposing different parameterized macroblocks based 84 on an H.264 encoder, considering an acuity fall-off. In their 85 approach, the hardware encoder and foreated encoders 86 have been merged to enable high-quality screen capture 87 between two displays over a standard Ethernet connection 88 (100-400 Mbps) for supporting remote collaborative visu-89 alization on large high-resolution displays with more than 90 44 megapixels. Recently, it has been demonstrated that 91 the quality limitation problems of standard transform en-92 coders may be overcome by deep learning approaches, in 93 which deep networks are trained to reconstruct peripheral 94 areas from very sparse samples [106]. These results are 95 extremely promising, especially in the context of emerging 96 360° video formats [255]. As hardware-accelerated real-97 time video codecs integrated with GPUs have now become 98 an essential enabling technology for many real-time graph-99 ics applications running over the network, e.g., cloud gam-100 ing [197], it is expected that future foreated codecs would 101 be of even larger importance in VR settings [94]. For max-102 imum benefits, it is important to integrate compression 103 solutions with renderers, so as to avoid spending time on 104 pixels on which few bits will be allocated. 105

9.3. Foveated transmission

Foveated transmission attempts to conserve bandwidth 107 by sending only detailed information in the ROIs and low-108 ering it to the periphery. Video transmission consumes 109 most of the bandwidth over the internet. For instance, in 110

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2019, 72% of the total mobile data traffic has been used 1 for video transmission [138]. For this reason, much of the work concerning foveation has concentrated on improving general video transport for streaming services [193]. In this context, notable video transmission methods designed to concentrated effort on the fovea and reduce it in the periphery are gaze-dependent multimedia transmission [138], log-polar transformation [156, 154, 155], logrectilinear [128] transformation, gaze crop filter [189] and likelihood-based foreation [51]. A notable result has been 10 presented by Kim et al. [109], who developed the first 11 foveated video player based on MPEG Dynamic Adap-12 tive Streaming (DASH) over HTTP and Spatial Relation-13 ship Description for high definition 360° video streaming. 14 In this approach, the scene is first subdivided into differ-15 ent regions. After the decoding of the regions, bit-stream 16 stitching and 3D texture mapping are applied. Finally, a 17 multi-resolution rendering is used where the center view-18 port is rendered with full resolution, four sides with 1/2, 19 and corners with 1/4 of the resolution. However, while the 20 authors claim that frame rates can be improved by 10%-21 15%, there is no solid evidence to back up this assertion. 22 Likewise, Rondon et al. [189] designed a client-server sys-23 tem based on *bilayer resolution* and MPEG-DASH prin-24 ciple that streams only high-resolution 360° videos over 25 ROIs. In the implementation, generating a one-second-26 long segment of 30 frames, server delay is approximately 27 700 ms per segment, or ca. 23 ms per frame, closer to 28 tolerable latency. 29

Since minimizing end-to-end latency and maximizing
refresh frequency and image quality is essential for VR.
Thus, foveated transmission is also becoming a basic
block for remote and collaborative interactive applications,
which require a very close cooperation between rendering
and transmission components.

In *remote visualization*, there are two techniques possi-36 ble: render local and render remote [30]. For the first ap-37 proach, the entire data volume is sent to the client device 38 for rendering which requires high bandwidth. Aside from 39 bandwidth, the requisite computation power is mostly un-40 available for many low-end devices (e.g., tablets, smart-41 phones). The *second* technique where data can be ren-42 dered at the server and then sent to the low-end devices, is 43 more robust in that case. With an additional gaze-tracker, 44 remote rendering has opened a whole new application do-45 main like *foveated cloud gaming*, that allows playing high-46 end games on low-end devices, where low system latency is 47 crucial [158, 92, 93, 46]. Illahi et al. [94] recently demon-48 strated that using a parameterized Foveated Video En-49 coding for real-time interaction in cloud gaming reduced 50 bandwidth up to 10%. 51

Through foveated rendering, large-scale collaborative data visualization in a remote server has been demonstrated over standard bandwidth [258, 67]. In this context, Papadopoulos and Kaufman [168] designed a 1.5 gigapixels immersive display that can visualize both 360° videos and a large scientific data set over an internet browser. In addition to transmission, Syawaludin et al. [211] develop a dual-camera setup for 360° video-based remote interaction. Among the two cameras, one is a *pan-tilt-zoom camera*, and another is an omnidirectional camera but with the same frame rate.

Foreation has also been applied for the interactive cap-63 ture and transmission of volumetric videos taking into ac-64 count special 3D display characteristics. In particular, the 65 data processing and transmission load for light field dis-66 plays require an exceedingly large bandwidth and compu-67 tation resources. Adhikarla et al. [2] developed the first 68 light field data compression algorithm for a telepresence 69 application on a large-scale light field display. The method 70 takes into account display geometry and viewer positioning 71 for discarding unused parts of the images from a camera 72 array in the acquisition site before transmission. For a 73 19 second footage, this compression used only 20% of the 74 whole data stream without introducing temporal or spatial 75 artifacts. The approach was later extended to perform re-76 targeting to different light field displays through adaptive 77 depth range compression [113]. As the method generates a 78 depth map, it can be used to combine both synthetic data 79 and captured video. Thumuluri and Sharma [217] later 80 designed a light field data reconstruction technique that 81 claims faster data transmission. 82

10. Discussion

Foveated rendering has witnessed substantial progress in the past decades, growing from early methods aimed mainly at psycho-physical testings or proof-of-concept renderers to a variety of solutions for optimizing the rendering process in a variety of very demanding settings. Moreover, many of the proposed technical solutions have been used in a wide variety of realistic applications.

Our survey has provided an integrative view into this wide array of methods, highlighting the strengths and limitations that currently exist in the field. On the basis of this analysis, we provide a view of open problems and current and future works.

10.1. Improving current foveated rendering techniques

Foveated rendering is a potentially a very effective ap-97 proach to jointly optimize rendering fidelity, frame rate, 98 compression, transmission, and power consumption by 99 adaptively varying peripheral image quality. Many tech-100 niques have been proposed in the past, that we have 101 classified into four main peripheral degradation categories 102 (Sec. 5-8). While the survey clearly demonstrates large ad-103 vances in each of these categories, various bottlenecks still 104 exist, leaving large space for further research. This is due, 105 in particular, to the fact that, in most situations, foveation 106 provides significant benefits especially when the focus area 107 is maintained as small as possible, and very aggressive sim-108 plifications are applied. Under these conditions, even the 109 best available techniques are prone to introduce visible ar-110 tifacts on non-trivial scenes. 111

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Spatial artifacts due to insufficient density of rendered 1 images are an obvious outcome of foveated rendering ap-2 proaches, especially on several display kinds that strive 3 to offer a wide FOV coverage. For instance, maintaining high pixel density is crucial for minimizing stochastic 5 visual artifacts, especially for near-eve displays. For in-6 stance, it is now common to combine two displays, one 7 with high pixel density and another with low pixel den-8 sity a near-eye AR display that reduces both pixelation 9 and screen door effect (e.g., [213]). However, under even 10 moderate degrees of foveation, the low-pixel density dis-11 plays in the periphery often suffer from *staircase artifacts* 12 and motion aliasing (flickering). In addition, many other 13 14 spatial artifacts may arise from the individual techniques employed to reduce rendering complexity. For instance, 15 spatial edges are often visible in between layers created 16 by the foveation [72], pupil swim effects may be the result 17 of techniques that decompose a 3D scene into 2D layers 18 heloing [123] and haloing and occlusion/disocclusion prob-19 lems may arise from adaptive sampling approaches [144]. 20 Moreover, temporal artifacts remain among the most com-21 mon problems arising in foreated rendering, independently 22 from the peripheral degradation technique employed. This 23 is because the HVS is particularly vulnerable to tempo-24 ral instability. In fact, peripheral vision is particularly 25 sensitive to contrast changes and movements as the rods 26 are highly concentrated at the periphery (maximum den-27 sity at about 17° of the viewing direction) [65]. Periph-28 eral vision, like the fovea, is also essential for intuitively 29 perceiving the surroundings and reacting to changes and 30 movement. Moreover, when motion starts, for instance: 31 head rotation, eve movement, or animation, any visible 32 aliasing effects (e.g., a lower spatial resolution) can create 33 perceptible temporal artifacts, a.k.a., flickering. Surpris-34 ingly, the peripheral vision is more flicker sensitivity than 35 even stereoscopic depth perception [224, 8]. For this rea-36 son, flickering is possibly the most common visual artifact 37 in foveated rendering that often breaks the seamless vi-38 sual experience. A wide number of solutions have been 39 proposed to combat these problems, including blur map-40 41 ping [22, 106, 150], depth of field filters [242, 91], temporal smoothing filters [36], phase-aligned rendering [25, 222], as 42 well as display designs that strive to eliminate illumination 43 variations [68]. All these solutions, though effective, have 44 their pros and cons. For instance, blur also diminishes 45 the local contrast [22, 106, 150]. This contrast reduction 46 may lead to further visual artifacts, such as screen-door 47 effect, pop-up effect, spatial-edge artifacts, temporal alias-48 ing (flickering), and pupil swim effect [172, 97]. Moreover, 49 temporal filters are also prone to contrast reduction and 50 not easy to combine with many of the adaptive rendering 51 techniques [118, 36, 155, 97]. 52

10.2. Exploiting machine learning for foveated rendering 53

Efficient foveation techniques must quickly determine 54 the gaze point with the minimum latency and exploit it 55 to rapidly present a suitable approximation. This requires not only advances in tracking and display hardware but 57 also advances in models for predicting eye motion to reduce 58 latency and for determining image approximations that 59 provide the best quality within the available resource bud-60 get. While many first-principle solutions have been pro-61 posed with various degrees of success (see Sec. 5-8)), one 62 of the emerging research directions is to learn these mod-63 els from examples (see Table 9). Replacing or augmenting 64 trackers with an accurate gaze prediction model can reduce 65 both computing complexity and latency (see Section 3.5). 66 Research in this area is only starting. For instance, Lemley 67 et al. [125] attempted to predict eye-motion through CNN 68 architectures trained on the PoG dataset [153], and later 69 improved the approach using use an appearance-based CNN 70 model [126] on MPII-Gaze dataset [261]. Arabadzhiyska 71 et al. [14] present another end-to-end *amplitude-based* 72 user-specific saccade prediction model; however, two user 73 experiments prove that the user-specific model predicts 74 better saccade landing prediction than the general observer 75 model, highlighting the difficulty of devising general ap-76 proaches. Similarly, Mohammed and Staadt [159] model 77 gaze-movements on a 4×6 multi-LCD high-resolution dis-78 play with two reinforcement learning models, training and 79 testing them on the Microsoft Salient Object dataset [133], 80 and York University Eye Fixation dataset [35]. These ap-81 proaches show the interests of the approach, but also high-82 light that current solutions are not robust to user-specific, 83 and display-specific. 84

Learning techniques are also starting to deliver results also in the area of rendering. In particular, Fridman et al. 86 [66] developed the first *Foveated Generative Network* and 87 an online tool, *SideEye* for peripheral vision simulation, 88 and Deza and Jonnalagadda [55] proposed another deep 89 learning-based framework to construct visual metamers 90 NeuroFovea in real-time. Moreover, Kaplanyan et al. [106] 91 explored the usage of generative adversarial neural net-92 works to reconstruct a plausible peripheral video from a 93 small fraction of pixels provided every frame. The method, 94 fast enough to drive gaze-contingent head-mounted dis-95 plays in real-time on modern hardware, is shown capable 96 to produce visual experiences with no noticeable quality 97 degradation using only 10% of the pixels. Likewise, Thu-98 muluri and Sharma [217] designed generative adversarial 99 neural networks for light-field reconstruction, also using 10 100 times less light field data than the existing state-of-the-art 101 work. 102

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These early results show that the use of machine learn-103 ing to improve foreated rendering is a promising but still 104 not a fully explored research domain. Matthews et al. 105 [150] suggest that, in general, multi-rate shading is not 106 restricted to foveation and can be robustly implemented 107 using a neural network model. However, among the exist-108 ing research challenges is the relative shortfall of training 109 databases, which are not easy to synthesize. 110

10.3. Supporting multiple users

Foveated rendering is a view-dependent rendering opti-112 mization technique, and foreated algorithms are typically 113

Refer-	Platform	Applications	Technique	Database
ence				
[125]	AR/VR	Gaze prediction	Generative adversarial networks	PoG dataset [153]
[126]	AR/VR	Gaze prediction	CNN	MPII-Gaze dataset [261]
[159]	LHRD	User gaze model	MaxEntropyIRL, FIRL	MS Salient Object [133], York University Eye Fixation dataset [35]
[14]	Desktop	Saccade landing pre- diction	Parameterize amplitude model	In-house dataset
[106]	VR/Desktop	Video reconstruction	Generative adversarial- NN	YouTube-8M [1]
[217]	Light field display	Foveated reconstruc- tion and view synthesis	Convolutional Neural Net- work	DeepFocus [249]
[4]	Desktop	Object detection	HOG feature, latent- SVM-like framework	PASCAL VOC 2007 [62]
[66]	Desktop	Peripheral vision simu- lator	generative-NN	Places dataset [263]
[55]	Desktop	Visual metamers simu- lation	Deep learning	In-house dataset

Table 9. Notable foveated machine learning approaches, relevant platforms, applications, and used database.

designed for single-view only. The near-eye and headmounted displays are the most convenient for this intent.
However, in several situations, multiple users can simultaneously watch a display, and single-user techniques are
not directly applicable.

Regular small-sized displays makes it very difficult to take advantage of multiview foveation, since, in case of multiple users, much of the area of the display would be in focus. Even for large high-resolution displays, viewers are most of the time confined to the presenter's vision [195, 10 241, 240], and per-user foreation is still rare [65]. The 11 increase in size and resolution of display surfaces, often 12 combined with touch interfaces, and the need for remote 13 and co-located collaboration makes multi-user foveation a 14 very appealing alternative [67], and can be identified as a 15 very interesting area for future research. 16

Non-conventional displays, which typically require much 17 effort per pixel, are also offering important research oppor-18 tunities. For instance, a light field display allows multiple 19 users to watch a single scene from different perspectives. 20 and, as noted by Spjuit et al. [102], efficient multi-user 21 foreation is essential to avoid the computation of the very 22 large number of rays not directed towards a viewer. De-23 veloping scalable and efficient techniques in these cases re-24 quires considerable research and engineering efforts, com-25 bining precise multi-user tracking with scalable, and of-26 ten display-specific, low-latency parallel rendering meth-27 ods taking into account foreation. 28

²⁹ 10.4. Evaluating the visual quality of foveated rendering

The advancement in foveation technology cannot be disjoint from advancements in methods for evaluating the visual quality of results. With foveated rendering, the graphics quality should be persistent and acceptable regardless of application specifications. While several efforts have been targeting evaluation, no consistent and standard evaluation method yet for assessing the foveated rendering quality, both subjectively or objectively. 37

Subjective evaluation is, in principle, very appealing, 38 since it directly considers humans as the end-user of 39 a graphics output [80, 173, 210]. However, it is also 40 framework-based, scene-dependent, and observer-biased. 41 Moreover, it is time- and resource-consuming, since the re-42 sulting scores need to be calculated from a decent amount 43 of observers over multiple viewing sessions in which the 44 observers confirm the foveated rendering is impercepti-45 ble than perceptible. A few authors have also suggested 46 other qualitative measures than the pure ability to perceive 47 or not variations, such as *efficiency* and *consistency* [88]. 48 The *efficiency* of an experiment defines how quickly the 49 perceptual ratio will converge with higher performance 50 and lower experiment costs, such as shorter assessment 51 time or fewer judgments. Consistency, on the other hand, 52 seeks to assess the firmness of individual Quality of Ex-53 perience (QoE) ratings. Only a few studies allow wear-54 ing eyeglasses during the evaluation [9]. There are also 55 several testing approaches and statistical models used in 56 the literature to evaluate qualitative result, such as 2AFC 57 [223, 184, 65], MOS [138, 238, 219, 144, 143], ANOVA 58 [27, 243, 152, 59, 9, 182, 235, 163], T-test [207], pair-59 wise [163], and chi-square. Few other studies, such as 60 [163, 243, 111] use multiple statistical models to validate 61 their algorithms. 62

Objective evaluation based on quantitative measurements is often preferred by researchers because, the incorporation of models that predict outcomes for humans, leads to simpler ways to use the outcomes of the evalua-

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tion to drive adaptive methods. However, due to space-1 variant nature, the traditional perception-based graphics 2 quality matrices [130] is debilitated in foreated render-3 ing. A few research use conventional graphics quality metrics [40], e.g., SSIM [68, 169], DSSIM [154], PSNR 5 [225, 169], but measure the foveal and peripheral graphics 6 quality separately. Others, attempt to consider foreation-7 specific measures, for instance, the foveated wavelet im-8 age quality metric [230], that considers the spatial vari-9 ance of CSF, local visual cut-off frequency, the Foveal Sig-10 nal to Noise Ratio (FSNR), and Foveal Weight Signal to 11 Noise Ratio (FWSNR), that consider the distortion visi-12 bility decrement in the periphery [124], and the Foveated 13 Point Signal to Noise (FPSN) and Foveated Image Quality 14 (FIQ) metrics for holographic displays [123]. 15

Other authors have also proposed to adapt *full-reference* 16 image quality metrics to foveated rendering. For instance, 17 Tsai and Liu [220] sub-divides the scene into different win-18 dow sizes, measures window scores using traditional and 19 pool the scores together for an overall performance re-20 port. Other authors extend the the acuity fall-off model 21 to compute foveated variations on standard scores, such 22 as Foveated Mean Squared Error (FMSE) [188], Foveation 23 24 Adaptive Root Mean Squared Error (FARMSE) [228], or the FLIP perceptual metric [12]. Noteworthy, such full-25 reference graphics quality evaluation is impractical due 26 to the relative lack of reference in the graphics rendering 27 process. Recently Mantiuk et al. [147] proposed a full-28 reference visual quality difference metric, FovVideoVDP. 29 The metric can predict visual differences for different types 30 31 of distortions: blur, JPEG compression, flicker, and Gaussian additive noise at different eccentricity levels, tested 32 on rendering dataset, FOVDOTS. This metric is more ef-33 ficient for higher FOV displays, such as AR/VR displays. 34 However, color, glare, inter-channel masking, and eye mo-35 tion were not included in the model, which requires further 36 analysis. 37

Chen et al. [98] created the first compressed 360° video 38 database, *LIVE-FRL* that can be used for foveated image 30 and video quality assessment. This database consists of 40 190 videos with 8K quality, including 10 reference videos 41 and 180 distorted or foveated videos which are also gener-42 ated from the reference videos. Moreover, Jin et al. [99] 43 published a study on both subjective and objective qual-44 ity assessment of VR video compression, along with a 2D 45 and stereo 3D video database. The complexity of foreated 46 rendering quality evaluation and the high sensitivity to 47 display and tracking characteristics makes it a very active 48 research direction [210]. 49

50 10.5. Studying the effects of foveation artifacts on user 51 performance

While, ideally, the goal of foveation is to produce images indistinguishable from non-foveated ones, in practice some artifacts may appear in the rendered images. These artifacts may result from imperfections in tracking or displays, delays in various stages of the pipeline, or approximations in rendering methods or guiding metrics. Moreover, even in the case in which imperceptible images could be generated, it is often useful for applications to have the opportunity to trade image quality with speed, to come for massive/complex models or vary spatiotemporal realism depending on tasks.

A large set of studies in cognitive psychology have iden-63 tified two interrelated classes of visual processing, referred 64 to as *preattentive* and *attentive* vision, respectively [87]. 65 In this model, preattentive vision scans large areas not-66 ing features that represent changes in pattern or motion. 67 These features include color, size, luminance, motion, pat-68 terns, shape, orientation, curvature but not closure, gaps, 69 or terminators. Attentive visual processes refer, instead, to 70 processes required to recognize details about objects and 71 relationships in scenes. In an early study, Watson et al. 72 [232] suggest that, due to these human visual system char-73 acteristics, dynamic LOD control has to be content and 74 task-dependent. As a result, during operations such as vi-75 sual search, the observer necessitates more global visual 76 information, leading to less foveation. Multiple studies 77 have, thus, studied various forms of degradation during 78 visual search tasks, to find how imperfect foreated dis-79 plays affect visual performance. Other authors have con-80 centrated their efforts on finding good central area sizes 81 in which models have to be rendered at full resolution for 82 gaze-contingent displays. Results vary from as large as 83 around 10° [163] to less than 2° [26, 134] depending on 84 the display, frequency of update, and image content. The 85 same experiments performed on a desktop monitor and a 86 near-eye VR display also show a wide variation (e.g., from 87 $2^{\circ}-5^{\circ}$ for the monitor to 30° for the near-eve VR display). 88 As noted very early by Watson et al. [233], however, view-89 ers are more sensitive to how degraded are LODs in the 90 periphery than the reduction of the central area. 91

While much of the research has concentrated on the 92 degradation of resolution and geometric detail, chromatic 93 sensitivity has also been shown to have important effects 94 (see Sec. 7.2). Due to the complex inter-relations be-95 tween physiological and psychophysical factors, it has been 96 shown that color sensitivity is task-dependent, and that, 97 for search tasks, color precision cannot be reduced in the 98 same way as visual acuity [59]. For instance, when the 99 spatial detail is lowered by 50% after a 5° viewing angle, 100 the chromatic reduction should not be dropped before 20° , 101 otherwise, deterioration may become visible. This task de-102 pendence is also emphasized by the differences in outcomes 103 of several user studies. Hansen et al. [81] recommend that 104 the color sensation becomes more *dichromatic* at about 105 $25^{\circ}-30^{\circ}$, due to the lack of L and M cones, and becomes 106 absent at eccentricity after 40° for weak stimuli. However, 107 Ayma et al. [17] conduct color zone mapping with two user 108 experiments in which the results prove that color percep-109 tion is even better above 20° eccentricity; but, from the 110 mid-periphery ($\approx 40^{\circ}$), the red-green hue appears to be 111 less chromatic than yellow-blue due to the *post-receptoral* 112 cortical process. Similarly, Buck et al. [37] suggest that 113

the fovea-like color vision still exists out to at least 45°
eccentricity. Besides the eccentricity, the stimulus size is
also a critical and crucial parameter for color perception.
Noorlander et al. [166] analyze that under specific spatial and temporal conditions, such as a large target size
and low temporal frequency (1 Hz), different hues can be
perceived at the eccentricity of up to 90°. However, color
perception is not constant across the life span. Webster et
al. [237] prove that the color degradation even is visible
after near periphery (8°) because of aging.

The high variability in reported results and the dependence on display, content, and degradation techniques indicates that considerable research is still required to find good ways to aggressively degrade quality in the center and periphery without impacting search performance.

¹⁶ 11. Conclusion

17 This survey has provided an integrative view of the domain of foveated rendering, focused mainly on the tech-18 niques that have been employed to perform the optimiza-19 tion. Our first classification separates the methods into 20 broad classes based on the main optimization performed: 21 adaptive resolution, geometric simplification, shader sim-22 plification, and chromatic degradation, as well spatio-23 temporal deterioration techniques provides. We've seen 24 commonalities and differences among these methods, as 25 well as specializations to specific setups, in particular con-26 cerning dynamic or static gaze points and raycasting and 27 rasterization-based solutions. While the classes were well 28 separated, we have also seen that it is not uncommon 29 that actual solutions borrow methods from all of them, 30 combining, e.g., the peripheral pixel undersampling of the 31 adaptive resolution, with adaptive LODs for geometry, and 32 spatio-temporal filters and caches. 33

The survey has also highlighted the substantial successes 34 of these techniques, and their proven capability to drive 35 a variety of applications. In terms of setups, moreover, 36 while it was mostly applied to VR displays for a long time, 37 recent years have seen an expansion towards near-eye AR 38 and large high-resolution displays. With the current trend 39 towards high-resolution displays covering large FOVs, it is 40 expected that the technique will become more and more 41 important. 42

However, despite the very significant successes and the 43 potentially enormous gains of the method, it is still true 44 that "foveated rendering is the holy grail in the mod-45 ern computer graphics world, exciting but virtually elu-46 sive" [63]. This is mostly because, in order to really un-47 leash its potential, foveation has to be applied very ag-48 gressively, which is extremely difficult, especially on large 49 and complex scenes with photorealistic lighting. Mod-50 erate peripheral degradation has been shown to produce 51 very high-quality experiences but also provides moderate 52 advantages with respect to other non-foveated adaptive 53 rendering techniques. Foreation gains start to be very 54 effective when the central region is small and peripheral 55

degradation is high. This is, however, not generally achievable without artifacts given today's state-of-the-art, as discussed in Sec. 10. We expect developments in both the computational and hardware-based solutions to eclipse today's best techniques in the near future, raising the standard of foveated rendered graphics to new heights.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme "EVOCA-TION" under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 813170. We thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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